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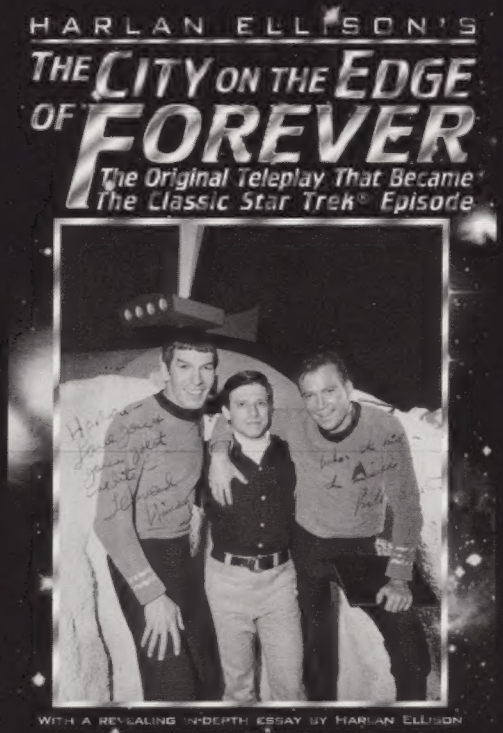
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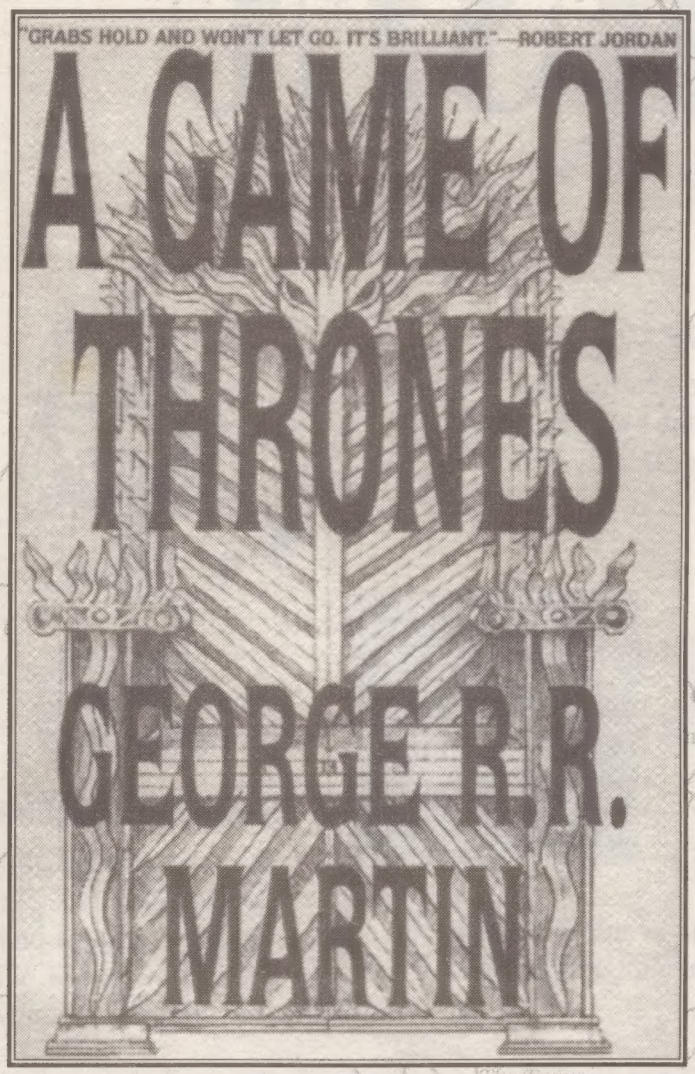

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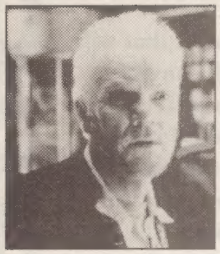

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One year later

As I sit here to compose this monstrosity, I think back to a discussion I had with a fellow publisher last spring.

At the time, the publisher was exhorting the virtues of the American marketplace. "Canada is too small a market to survive on," he told me. During our conversation, he stressed that if Parsec is to prosper and grow, the magazine must cater to readers south of the border. To tell the truth, it's hardly a new argument. It's been used for almost every business that comes to mind. Heck, even the Canadian Football League went to the United States to survive.

For more than 45 minutes, my fellow publisher explained the benefits of pushing our wares down south. It was a compelling argument that had all the allure of gold in the Yukon during the late 1800s. (Actually, Parsec is available in the U.S., but why spoil a good writing jag?). Then came the finale. If Parsec was to make inroads in the U.S., it would have to drop the Canadian reference that has appeared on our cover since issue number three. Apparently being Canadian doesn't make one a marketable commodity — something that the Canadian Football League has come to realize.

And that's where he lost me.

Since that meeting, I've been thinking about dropping the reference — actually, I've been thinking about why it's important that the reference remain.

Quite simply, dropping the reference would be like losing our name. Being Canadian is part and parcel of our identity. Parsec was intended to be a place for Canadian writers and artists to hone their skills and make inroads into a competitive industry. John, Norm and I gain some measure of pride in the fact that a handful of our writers have manuscripts under consideration by publishers.

Their success is in no way due to their exposure in Parsec, but it does show the wealth of talent north of the border — talent that we are fortunate enough to tap into six times a year.

With all its flaws, I'm quite proud of Parsec and what we've managed to accomplish since we first hit the stands more than 12 months ago. There have been times when I've wondered if the personnel changes, the late nights, the lost weekends, the late-night calls from contributors who've forgotten when their deadlines were or to get help on a story— calls which always seem to come on nights when I've packed it in before midnight (which isn't too often), the chasing down of errant advertisers, or even writing a weekly newspaper column are worth my hefty Tylenol® bill.

But then I talk to these same contributors, to readers or to people at conventions, and their love for science fiction or even for Parsec and my enthusiasm for the task at hand is rekindles. Talking about the latest movies, books or what Robert Sawyer is up to (I haven't the faintest idea) or even getting some criticism about the magazine is the best part of the job. It is one of those benefits that I never expected when we started Parsec. To ignore our ties to Canada and Canadian fans, writers and artists would seem to be a betrayal of this spirit.

And we won't do it.

As appealing as it is to simply remove three words and take advantage of the attractive U.S. market, it just isn't in the cards for us. I just hope we won't go the way that the B.C. Lions and Ottawa Roughriders seem ready to go.

Now on with Year Two.

— Chris

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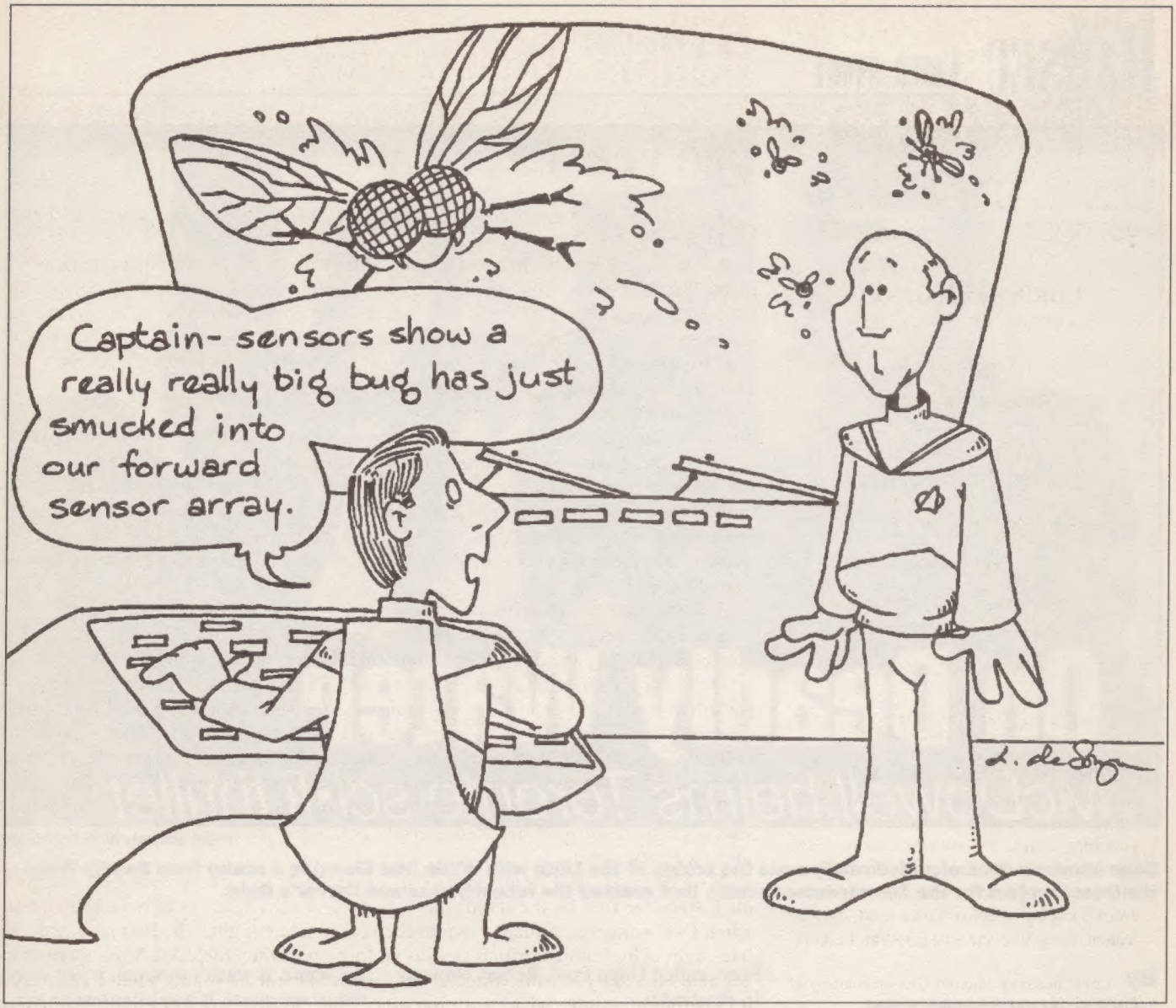

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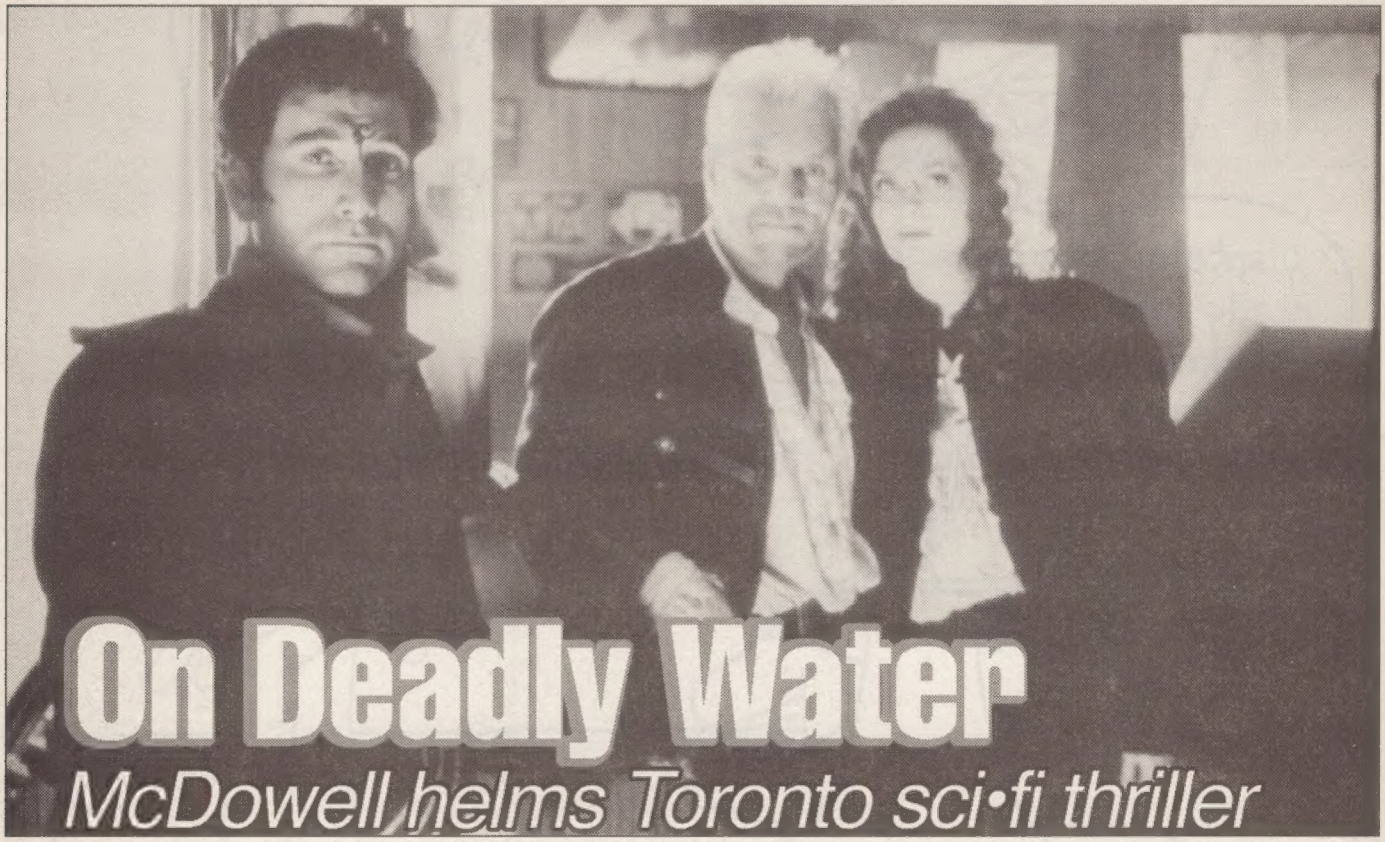


On Deadly Water

McDowell helms Toronto sci•fi thriller

Photo courtesy of Michael Gibson

Sean Murdoch (Malcolm McDowell) mans the bridge of the Lilith with Willie (Hal Eisen) in a scene from Deadly Wake — the latest project for the Toronto-based studio that created the recently-renamed Carver's Gate.

By
PETER BLOCH-HANSEN

The man who killed Captain Kirk; the man, who, as A Clockwork Orange's Alex, raped and murdered his way through a near-future London, England; and who in If, led an armed revolt in an English private school, is not the man you'd think.

"It may sound a bit odd," says Malcolm McDowell, "but I think everything I do is a bit comedic."

Known for his chilling portrayals of villains, McDowell sees even his darkest work as comedic.

"If you think back to A Clockwork Orange, singing 'Singing in the Rain' while raping and beating is certainly very, very black, but actually, a comedic thing to do. There are a lot of things in A Clockwork Orange that are satirical and very funny. I just did a film with Sean Penn, called Hugo Pool. Robert Downey Jr. directed it.

"I had this long monologue and I had this idea that I'd be walking around, but no; Bob Downey asked me if I would mind doing it taking a dump, by the side of the road. It was hilarious."

The veteran actor takes comedy quite seriously, however.

"Everything has to come from the truth," he insists. "If it's going to be really funny, it has to be truthful and real. Mugging is not a good thing to do. If the writing is funny, then it's going to be funny, and if it's not, then I don't care what you do, it's not going to be funny — unless you're Jim Carrey.

"I always go for the funnier moments, and push the envelope as far as I can. For instance in the part (of Dr. Sohren) in Star Trek, coming into the Klingon ship and right off the bat, punching one of the sisters in the face. That was a sort of fun thing to do, a good way to start the scene. It wasn't scripted, it just came out of rehearsal. It was hilarious on the set."

One of McDowell's notable SF roles was not as a villain, but rather as the hero of 1979's Time After Time.

"That's a comedic piece too," says the actor, "whimsical. It's one of the harder things to play, I think. It's so easy to go over the top. That's always the big mistake that's made with playing comedy, just doing too much."

Against type once again, McDowell was in Toronto this spring to play another SF good guy, Captain Sean Murdoch in P.N.A.'s Deadly Wake, directed by Michael Jackson. Murdoch commands a ship loaded with toxic waste, caught up unawares in an international corporate power struggle.

"He's a flawed man, if not a really good man, I think," McDowell reveals. "He's a bit of an alcoholic, although he's trying to keep it under control. Because

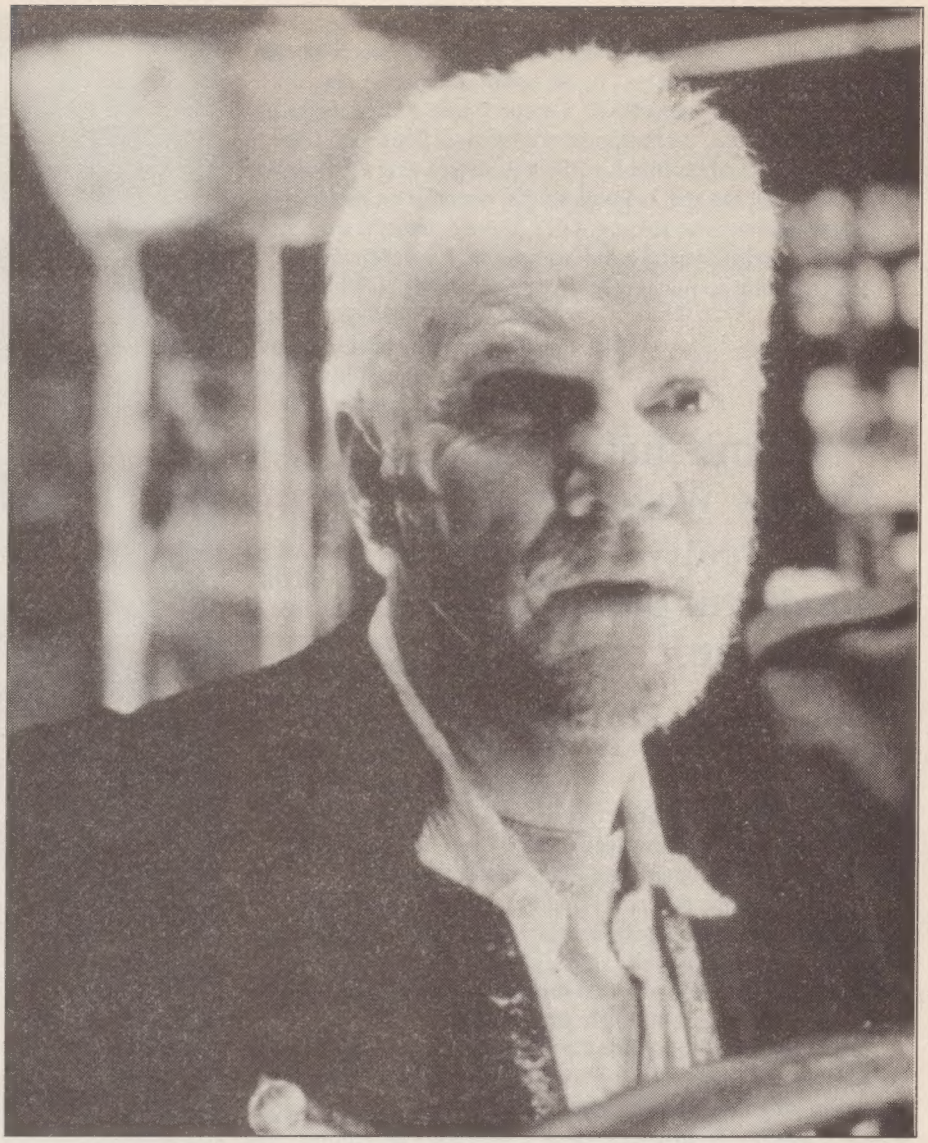
he is uncompromising, he is sympathetic. He was in the wrong place at the wrong time, and made a mistake in his career that's cost him dearly. That's why he takes on the job of captaining this ship. He knows there's something fishy about it, but he needs the break. That's what makes this interesting. He is a very flawed character, but flaws attract us. Nobody is all strong and good. To be a complete human being you have to show the vulnerability, the two sides of the coin.

"I knew when I read this that I really wanted to do it. I liked the script a lot, and I liked the idea behind it. I thought it was kind of different from the other scripts that I'd been reading, and more interesting, really. But you know instantly whether you're really interested or not. It's intuition."

Despite his numerous SF roles, McDowell is not a fan. "I'm only vaguely interested in science fiction per se," he discloses. "I'm interested in the human condition, and if that's in the setting of SF, then so be it. A lot of science fiction, if it isn't done really well is bloody awful. I love Blade Runner, and 2001 is my favourite science fiction movie. I think that's a masterpiece. I turn down an awful lot, but if it's a good part, I'll do it, you know. I don't really care that much."

Of his experience on Star Trek: Generations, McDowell has only good things to say. "I had a lot of fun doing it. Bill (Shatner) is a man of many talents, as I discovered sitting on a mountaintop with him for quite some time. Patrick Stewart and Bill were very pleasant, very civilized people and we had a lot of giggles. Which is all you can do in that kind of stuff. You can't take that too seriously.

"I nearly said it's not Shakespeare, but actually, it's probably the nearest thing to Shakespeare that the modern stuff does, because you wear tights and all that. You run around like Coriolanus or something. If it's a good costume, it becomes part of a character. If you can move well in the costume, I think that's very, very important, because movies are about movement. In science fiction, it's vital to get the costumes right. To give you an instance, the first costume I wore in Star Trek — I shot for one day in it — was a powder blue number. I got a call at six in the morning the next day from the director, who hadn't slept all night. He was worried that because of this damned costume, I'd sort of disappear behind the blue screen, and also because for a heavy, blue is not really a great colour. Within about two hours, they'd made me another costume in black, which was the right way to go. I loved that costume.



"I loved the costume that I had in Deadly Wake too. It has a sort of Georgian feel about it with the coat and a sort of rough shirt. It is like a period costume, really, in a modern context.

"And the style of acting in science fiction, it's a bit more Shakespearean, except for the meter of the language. In a way you have to be fairly large with it, but always being real, finding a style that people believe. It's my responsibility to make sure they do. Usually, especially in science fiction, the writing is very unpoetic: you say what you mean. But of course, nobody really says what they mean, so I try to always give another spin on things. I try to give these characters as many colours as I can, to make them complex human beings. I never like to play a line in an obvious way.

"I'll go against it, or do something else with it if I can. I'll give you an instance. There was a

"Bill (Shatner) is a man of many talents, as I discovered sitting on a mountaintop with him for quite some time."

tiny little scene in Deadly Wake, where the captain sees a bomb (hidden on his ship) and there's really not much he can do about it. That's all it was in the script. I chose to play up that he has a major breakdown. I made it into a huge moment, an important scene, just because of intuition. This man sees the bomb and realizes that his life dream, and that the thing he loves the most, the sea, is about to die, because on the ship is this material that is so toxic it will kill the oceans. It may work out to be a terrible mistake, but somehow, it just felt right."

After playing so many roles, for so many years, Malcolm McDowell, a comedic actor at heart, is philosophical about the fact so much of his career has been spent playing villains.

"I think that Deadly Wake is a really wonderful part for me."

"This just happens to be the slot I've been dealt in life," he points out, "but I don't think that's me at all, or that's me as an actor. All the serious work I've done has been on the stage, which is where you really get to fill out your really complex characters, and get to really stretch yourself and work properly, you know. Not that you can't in film, of course, but not quite to the same extent.

"As Anthony Hopkins used to say, 'well, it's just acting isn't it?' Honestly, I can't put it any better than that.

"Usually, things pan out. It really is a very instinctive thing, and that's not just for actors. If that little voice inside says, 'do this,' then usually, it's right. You can always tell, because if you're doing something another way, there's always a niggling doubt. I hate that feeling.

"For example, I think that Deadly Wake is a really wonderful part for me. I was playing a good guy this time. That's probably why I enjoyed it more. It was a bit of a change, you know. I was really thrilled to do it. Everybody in Toronto was really supportive of the project. I don't ever remember an angry word on the set at all. If all the films that I do in the future are like that I'm going to be a very lucky man. ☆

Photo by Michael Gibson

Baby is the ship's 86-year-old Fetal-Neural computer — an embryo hard-wired into the ship's navigation system.

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Check out our comprehensive convention listings on page 39

Walsh has fun being evil

By
PETER BLOCH-HANSEN

Over the phone from Kentucky, Gwyneth Walsh's memorable voice is deep and sultry.

"I'm not sure what the technical definition of dominatrix is," she declares, with a delicious laugh.

She is speaking of her recent role as Martine Quiller in Toronto-based P.N.A. company's futuristic feature, Deadly Wake, which takes place on an ocean freighter loaded with serious toxic waste. Walsh's Quiller is driven by a power lust that threatens to destroy all life in the oceans.

Famous for her portrayal of Star Trek's ruthless Klingon sister, B'Etor, Walsh is no stranger to playing villains.

"I guess you could say Quiller is a dominatrix," she concedes, laughing again. "That's not how I think of her, but within certain men's fantasies, she fits the bill. I don't know whether she's a psychopath, but science fiction tends to have characters within that realm. Quiller is certainly dominating, she's certainly power hungry, but there're no whips. I had a really sexy black suit though, but no leather, alas.

"Possibly there would have been leather if time and money had permitted. On Star Trek, initially, I think, it was sexy vinyl, and when they remade the costume for the movie, then it became sexy leather."

"I wouldn't say that I don't like playing evil characters," reveals the hard-working actress, "because, quite frankly, they're usually much more interesting than the goodie-two-shoes. It's especially true for women, because if you're not a villain, you're somebody's girlfriend, or wife, or daughter. Women still don't tend to be quite as well-written as some of the men's roles. Evil characters are just a lot more fun. I always try to find a psychological underpinning, so whatever they're doing makes complete sense to them, so they don't feel that they are evil.

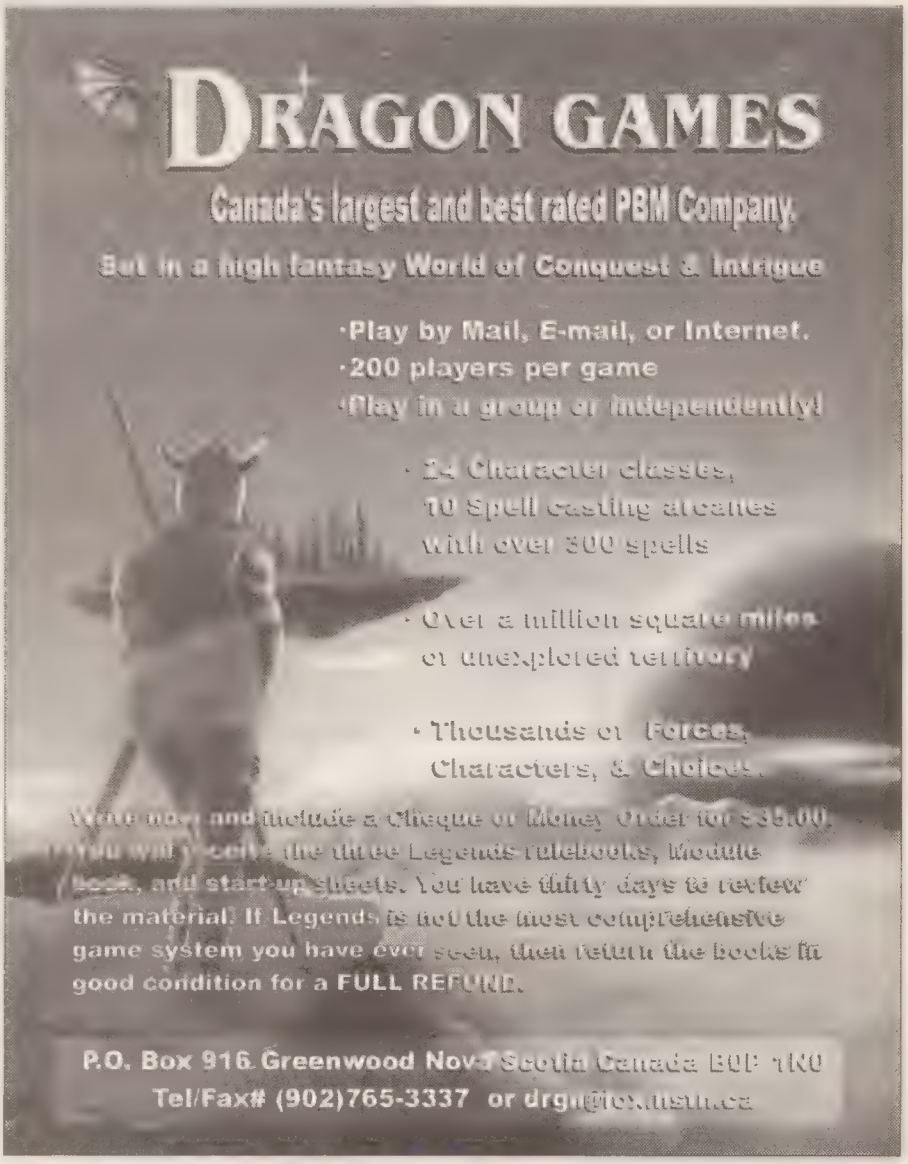
"But there's more to sink your teeth into with villains, more passion, good scenery-chewing opportunities, if you're so inclined."

"B'Etor did chew scenery. I think she probably chewed anything that came in her way. The first episode (Redemption, Parts I & II) was when we had more to do. We had more fun. I think the powers that be were a little bit overwhelmed by what they had created in the Duras sisters, so they became cautious as time went on. They've not really explored the Klingon women that much. I think they're not really sure whether they should make them exactly like the men, or whether they should be different, and if so, how, so they just don't deal with the questions. But it's not my issue."

"B'Etor did chew scenery. I think she chewed anything that came her way."

Memories of her Star Trek persona surface easily, since after henching with veteran British actor, Malcolm McDowell in his role as the deranged Dr. Soren in Generations, Walsh played opposite his good-guy Captain Murdoch in Deadly Wake.

"He's delightful, very funny and very dry," she reveals, with a hint in her voice that she is not revealing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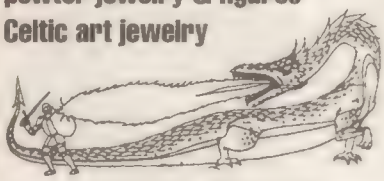

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Photo courtesy and © Paramount Pictures

The Duras Sisters, Barbara March and Walsh, were among the favourite villains in the Star Trek universe and the two who polished off the Enterprise in the last movie.

all.

"And he's a bit of a rogue. He's got a twinkle in his eye. You have to be careful or he will make you laugh just before they yell, 'action.' In my books, he comes from that school of extremely well-trained, excellent to-get-along-with British actors who have their roots on the stage. Patrick Stewart is like that. They are always extremely well-prepared. They don't have one ounce of ego that gets in the way of their work. They're just delightful to work with."

Walsh expresses no fear of being typecast a villain. "I enjoy looking at the dark side in my work," she says thoughtfully, "but I am nothing like that. A friend and I were referring to ourselves in terms of Archie characters the other day, and I wish I was Veronica, but I am definitely Betty. Consequently, it gives me a lot of pleasure to do things that I would never have the guts to do in real life.

"Because I'm tall and have a kind of low voice, I tend to get a lot of roles that are sort of commanding, strong women. These women, when men write them, very often end up becoming a threat, becoming ball-busters. And it is kind of fun.

"There's this one long scene in Deadly Wake, where I'm walking down this hallway, and there are all these bodies that I sort of have to step on. In the last take I did, there was this guy whose hand was right in my way. In the rushes you can see me turning around to say, 'did I hurt you? Are you okay?' "

> "My phrase for acting is it's emotion without repercussions."

My phrase for acting is it's emotion without repercussions. I wish the whole world had that opportunity occasionally. You get to feel a whole mess of interesting things and you don't ever get in trouble for anything you feel."

That remark brings up the famous Picard head-stroking scene from The Next Generation's Redemption episode.

"That was not scripted," Walsh discloses with a deep laugh. "There were no repercussions. I couldn't tell you why I wanted to touch the top of Patrick's head. Maybe it was because I haven't had that much experience with bald men. He has a very lovely head. I was trying to find a way to express B'Etor's desire

Photo by Michael Gibson

Captain Sean Murdoch (Malcolm McDowell) drags Willie (Hal Eisen) to meet Quiller (Walsh) on the bridge of the Lilith. For Walsh, it was her second screen appearance with McDowell.

and sexuality that was somewhat uncommon. Patrick was fine with it. He didn't mind at all."

Though her first feature film was a Toronto-made, low-budget SF/horror movie, Walsh's career is not heavy with SF projects, she is fond of the genre.

"I'm a big fan of science fiction," she enthuses. "I've always watched it. I was a huge devotee of the original Star Trek series. I think I watched all the reruns of Lost In Space and all those other ones. I read some science fiction too, like the Thomas Covenant series by Stephen. R. Donaldson. I love Douglas Adams. I think some of the best science fiction television comes out of England, like the Red Dwarf series. I think science fiction is very difficult to do well. I've gained a greater appreciation of what Roddenberry managed to do right by seeing how difficult he is to imitate, and how many others attempt it and do not succeed.

"As for Deadly Wake, there's a sort of mythological underpinning to it, about time, which is cyclical, and there's also a storyline about Quiller's agenda, but because of time constraints. I'm not sure which one is going to win out. I don't think the film is trying to refigure anything. I think they're trying as well as they can, to make a film that is commercially viable but with intelligence behind it.

"I think science fiction has to be pretty intelligent because the people who watch it, do tend to be quite up on the scientific theories behind it. You can't condescend to them." ☆

Sci•Fi channel gets go-ahead

The Canadian Radio Television-Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) has approved CHUM's application for a science fiction channel.

CHUM's application was among the 23 that were approved in late August — including a number for the Toronto-based company.

But there is little chance the channel will be up and running anytime soon. According to a company spokeswoman, CHUM has three years to get the channel on the air, and it is not one of the company's priorities.

Among the series that the company says could be part of its schedule are Star Trek, Doctor Who, the Jetsons and Beauty and the Beast. There are also plans to air Canadian-made productions.

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Other world adventures
Lloyd slides into fun

By
GREGG CHAMBERLAIN

It's easy to tell that Sabrina Lloyd loves her work.

Even over the telephone from her telephone in New York City, Lloyd's voice rings with enthusiasm as she talks about her role as Wade Wells, the distaff member of the Sliders team.

"It's a fun show," Lloyd said. "action and adventure and pure entertainment. People who enjoy it, accept it for that."

While fans enjoy the show, Lloyd truly enjoys playing her character.

"The character, initially, is what really attracted me," she explains. "Wade Wells is totally unlike any character I'd ever seen on television.

"She's an adventurer. She came from a place where she really wasn't too sure of herself, but she has strong beliefs and is not afraid to fight for them. She's a fun character to play.

"She's a real fighter."

Trained at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in California and at the Brisbane Royal Theatre Company of Australia, Lloyd has had starring roles in various theatre productions in the United States and Australia, plus supporting and co-starring roles in movies like Father-Hood, That Night and Chain of Desire, as well as television productions such as Law and Order.

Sliders is the first science fiction-oriented project she has worked on. The concept for the series was another reason why, when the chance came to audition for the part of Wade, Lloyd decided to go for it instead of looking around for another role.

"This is the one television role that I was really interested in," she explains.

Normally Lloyd is leery of television series work because "it can become a bit monotonous."

Sliders was different, though, because of the series' premise of travel through alternate worlds.

"I feel like it's a different show every week. Because it is always changing. We're always in a new 'world' every week."

Photo courtesy Fox Broadcasting

Wade Wells is unlike any other on television, says Sabrina Lloyd. The character is an adventurer who has strong beliefs and isn't afraid to stand up for them.

It also helps that Lloyd is a science fiction fan.

"Any kind of science fiction. I think it's all different and unique."

She was intrigued by the science fiction premise that the Sliders series would explore.

"The possibilities of if (alternate worlds/futures) fascinate me."

But wanting the role of Wade Wells and getting it were two different things.

"I did the whole process. Audition, callback, second audition and then they flew me out to L.A. to screen test."

In the end, though, Lloyd succeeded in convincing everyone that she was right for the part.

It's often been said that travel can be an enlightening experience. While the Sliders have spent about 18 months trying to find their way back to their own Earth, Lloyd believes that Wade has matured a great deal since the series began because of all the personal and physical challenges the character has had to deal with during the group's wanderings.

"I think she is always changing," Lloyd explained. "I don't think that anyone is set in black and white. She's finding herself."

"I see Wade like I see Sabrina. She is always learning from her experiences."

An example of her character's self-discovery occurred in the episode, *Time Again and World*, when she had the same man die in her arms during mirror-image assassination incidents on two worlds.

"That was the first episode we shot for the second season," Lloyd said, adding that Wells' shocked reaction and feelings of guilt were a result of two things: her first experience with death and coming to the realization that sliding between worlds was not like an amusement park ride or a game of make-believe.

"I see Wade like I see Sabrina. She is always learning from her experiences."

There have also been some changes in the relationship between Wells and the other members of the Sliders group.

"The relationship has definitely grown. One person she definitely feels connected to is Rembrandt."

Lloyd observed that the close friendship which has developed between Wade and Rembrandt parallels the relationship between herself and Cleavant Derricks who portrays Rembrandt "Crying Man" Brown.

"Me and Cleavant, as people, are very good friends. Cleavant is sort of like my big brother figure," she notes that the series writers have picked up on this relationship between the two actors and have tried to incorporate it into the storylines.

The relationship between Wells and Quinn Mallory has also changed over time.

Lloyd said her character is no longer the love-sick puppy she was at the beginning of the series. Wells has become more self-confident and views him as being her peer.

Relations between Wells and Professor Arturo may often resemble a balancing act between two people going in two different directions on the same high wire. Lloyd sees both her character and John Rhys-Davies' as very strong-willed personalities which tend to clash.

"But it's also a bit like with Rembrandt," she adds.

Often Arturo will come across as being either a brother or a father figure for Wells. Again, Lloyd said her relationship off-camera with Rhys-Davies sometimes mirrors the relationship on-camera between Wells and Arturo.

"He is the veteran actor of the show and we all look up to him."

Lloyd and Rhys-Davies often engage in friendly philosophical discussions away from the camera, though they may end up arguing opposing ideas or beliefs.

In episodes like *Time and Again and World* and *Post Traumatic Sliding Syndrome* the characters have shown signs of the tension and stress building up from constantly sliding from world to world in search of home.

In the end, Lloyd observed, both for the Sliders characters on their seemingly endless journey between the worlds and for the four actors who portray them, it's important that everyone is able to get along when they're together for a long time, even if they don't agree on every-

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thing.

"If you're travelling with people, you'd better be close," she said.

"I've never worked with a cast that I liked as much as I like these three men."

Lloyd hasn't quite decided yet on which Sliders episode would be her favourite.

"There are so many funny ones. *Post Traumatic Sliding Syndrome*, I think will be the best one for all the characters."

She also enjoyed working on the second season's finale, which saw Wells meet herself for the very first time. "As an actor, that was a great challenge for me."

After two years, being Wells has almost become second nature for Lloyd — although she is careful to point out that there are some differences between the two of them.

"I see her as a bundle of energy. Wade has a lot more energy than Sabrina does."

A brief biography shows that Lloyd is not exactly a slouch herself. Included in a list of her special skills are: swimming, horseback riding, cycling, roller skating, jetskiing, rowing and alpine skiing. Lloyd was actually able to find some free time between shootings for the second season to indulge in some of her recreational interests.

"I've become a ski bunny," she giggled, adding that she and other Sliders cast and crew members spent as much time as they could away from the set in Vancouver and on the snow-covered slopes at the nearby Whistler ski resort area. LLoyd and the rest still ended up averaging 12-hour days, seven or eight days at a stretch, shooting the second season.

Originally from Fairfax, Virginia, and now living in New York, Lloyd has become very much at home on Canada's west coast during her Sliders sessions.

"I love Vancouver. It's a great shopping scene. I just love the Asian influence."

Lloyd hasn't yet become part of the sci•fi guest speaker scene, but she is looking forward to when she gets her first invitation to attend a convention as one of the lead attractions. For now, she's looking into a variety of projects until the word comes for her to return to Vancouver for another Sliders shooting session.

She'd like to become more involved in the behind-the-scenes aspects of television and film work, either writing or directing or something else which would "help work on new facets of creativity for me."

And on-camera?

"I know they're making a movie of Speed Racer," Lloyd said with a laugh. "And I would really love to be Trixie."

She'd also like to perform in a musical sometime and make greater use of the vocal instruction she received during her actor's training.

Which may be all still to come for Sabrina Lloyd. She doesn't plan to let hopes for the future interfere with having fun with what she's doing in the present.

"I'm living my dream right now." ☆

Photo courtesy Fox Broadcasting

Lloyd enjoys the relationship she has with her co-stars, particularly Cleavant Derricks, left, who she says is like a brother and John Rhys-Davies, which mirrors their on-screen personae.

Auberjonois relishes new directions

By
CHRIS KREJLGAARD

It's very early in the morning in California and Rene Auberjonois is already at work.

At the time of the interview, the prolific actor/director is eagerly awaiting the start of the latest season of Deep Space Nine. It is a season that opens with a changeling that won't, well, change.

Tried for the death of another changeling, Auberjonois's character, Odo, has been stripped of the ability to change his appearance. Losing something so central to his character seems to invigorate Auberjonois. Playing Odo suddenly became more challenging.

"It raises more questions about the character," Auberjonois says over the telephone. "It deepens the character. It makes Odo more interesting and more complex."

It is quite a change for a character that was less than complete when Auberjonois took on the role. By the actor's account, the character had little to do early on in the series. But it wasn't the workload that attracted Auberjonois to the role, it was the character.

"When I first met them to audition for the role of Odo, the script had very little to say about how they envisioned the character. It merely said that he had 'an oddly unfinished face'," he explained. "In the Emissary, Odo had relatively little to do, but the key to him I found in one of the

Photo courtesy Paramount Pictures

The friendship between Auberjonois and Armin Shimerman —helps the interplay between Odo and Qwark — a relationship that fans of Deep Space Nine relish.

Photo courtesy Paramount Pictures

Veteran stage, film and television actor Rene Auberjonois in a more familiar role as Const. Odo, above, and sans make up and the uniform.

lines he said to Major Kira (Nana Visitor), he said something to the effect of 'Major, I was found in the Delornius Belt. I don't know where I'm from or if there are any others like me in the universe.' I found that very evocative and challenging and I thought there was a lot of potential in that character.

"Odo a very alien character to express a very human dilemma that a lot of people can relate to. A lot of us don't know who we are or where we're going or if there are any more like us."

Of course, the character has evolved over the course of four seasons as Auberjonois and the series' writers have brought new textures to Odo.

"It's an ebb-and-flow process between the writers and me. Some weeks they will put something in the script that surprises me, and I relish those surprises, other times I will embellish the character and take him in a direction they never envisioned.

But when the mystery of his character's past was finally revealed to viewers, Auberjonois initially thought Odo was going to lose a key element. But he was pleasantly surprised.

"They deepened the character and gave him another conflict to deal with. Their solution was brilliant," he explained.

"I think you can't go season after season asking 'Where's he from? Where's he from?' without becoming bored with his dilemma. Now the dilemma is enriched. He knows where he's from and he can't go home."

"In the process of answering one question, a whole bunch of other questions are raised. That are very deep, very conflicting and very interesting to work on as an actor," he says.

Now stripped of his shape-shifting abilities, Odo's problems have multiplied — and so have the challenges for Auberjonois.

"Fans are going to say 'Oh my god, how can you take that away from Odo?', but I have every confidence that it's going to deepen the character.

"He's a very prideful character who has always observed human behavior and sort of put them down because he's never had to eat or smell. He's never had a body. Now he has to deal with that."

But Auberjonois says he doesn't believe that the loss of shape-shifting abilities won't last for the entire season.

After playing Odo for a couple of seasons, Auberjonois has the jump into the director's chair. Interestingly, it was another Star Trek alumnus who urged him to take on the task.

"Jonathan Frakes encouraged me to do it," Auberjonois explained. "Star Trek is one of the few places where an actor can get such an opportunity."

Frakes has a great deal of experience directing in the Star Trek universe. He cut his teeth on Next Generation episodes before moving on to Deep Space Nine and finally the upcoming Star Trek movie, First Contact. So he could tell Auberjonois what he was in for.

Even though he had directed stage productions, Auberjonois had to undergo a year of "directing school," which involved attending seminars and watched some of the behind-the-scenes processes in addition to his acting duties, before he was able to go behind the camera and take the reins of an episode.

"It has been a very important personal journey for me," Auberjonois said of his first time in the director's chair. "But there's no better place to do it than in Star Trek where you're supported by an extraordinary group of craftspeople and fellow artists.

"So I just decided that I had to take the chance when it was there to be taken."

Of course, he had an impressive background in theatre, movies and television that he could draw on when it came time to put his stamp on the production.

On the urging of family friend and mentor John Houseman, Auberjonois made his acting debut at the age of 16. He earned a Tony Award for his work in the musical, Coco — his first Broadway play.

Since then, he's appeared in such productions as Big River, The Good Doctor and City of Angels and along the way, picked a few more Tony nominations.

Auberjonois made his feature film debut in 1964's Lilith, but it would be six years before he appeared in a major project. In 1970's M*A*S*H, he took on the role of Dago Red (look carefully and you'll see him sipping a martini with Hawkeye and Trapper).

After working in the Robert Altman film, Auberjonois has taken on roles in movies as diverse as McCabe and Mrs. Miller, The Hindenberg, King Kong, The Eyes of Laura Mars, Police Academy 5, the Ballad of Little Joe and Star Trek 6, the Undiscovered Country. Of course, there was also television work.

> "Odo seemed to be a very alien character to express a very human dilemma that people could relate to."

His portrayal of Clayton Endicott Jr. on the long-running Benson, overshadows his numerous other roles in programs as disparate as The Mod Squad, Love, American Style, Harry O, Rhoda, the Bionic Woman, the Bob Newhart Show, the Man from Atlantis, Charlie's

Angels and Starsky and Hutch.

Even with this wealth of experience on his resume, Auberjonois noted that there is a huge difference between being an actor and being a director.

"When you're acting, you're part of the team and your responsibilities are well-defined. You're only responsible for yourself. You're a team player, but basically you only have to worry about yourself. But when you're a director you're responsible for everything. If a light bulb burns out, you're responsible for it. If the production grinds to a halt, even if you had nothing to do with it, you're responsible for it."

The task was made easier by his fellow actors who "bent over backwards" to help Auberjonois make the transition.

At the time of the interview, Auberjonois was sure that he would like to pick up more directing assignments during the upcoming season, although the restrictions of his character means that he can only handle two or three episodes a season.

> "We're used more as a spice to the general ingredients."

While his work as a director may continue during the coming season, it is Odo that captures most of Auberjonois's attention.

Star Trek fans know Auberjonois and Odo's interplay with barkeep Qwark is one of the high-points of any episode.

It doesn't hurt that both Auberjonois and Armin Shimerman (Qwark) are friends in real life.

"Armin and I are good friends," Auberjonois said. "We have similar work ethics and training.

"Actually, we do very little together in the show. We're used more as a spice to the general ingredients. We're usually used in an episode where they want to inject a little humor or conflict.

"But it is an indication of that chemistry that it's able to work when people come up and say Odo and Qwark are so great.

"We're sort of surprised because we don't do that much together, but even the little bit we do has a very strong effect."

Sci•Fi Cafe opens in Toronto

Sci-Fi World, long a bastion for Toronto's science fiction community, has announced that it will be opening a sci•fi cafe this fall.

The cafe, which will feature a giant screen television, is part of an expansion at the 1600 Steeles Ave. location. The expansion of the store will allow it to carry expanded product lines in books, games, toys, models, computer games and accessories, as well as comics.

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Kirk. . . Leonard Kirk

(No relation)

Perseverance gains Ontario artist long gig on Star Trek titles — until he got caught by a 'bad public relations move'

By JAMES ARMSTRONG

Ask comic book artist Leonard Kirk what his real name is and you'll get a frown.

"People seem to think I've changed my name to work on the Star Trek: Deep Space Nine series. It's really silly. Maybe it would be less believable if I called myself Leonard Spock Kirk Sulu. I don't get it," jokes Kirk.

Hailing from St. Catharines, Ont., the Illinois native received his bachelors degree in fine arts from Brock University — class of 1989. When it was suggested that he had what it took to get a master's degree, Kirk's response was "screw that."

Kirk knew what he wanted to do with

his degree and started to work on his first comic book art samples immediately after getting out of school.

"I wouldn't recommend this industry for anybody if it involves getting started," he says. "Getting started is hell, and it's a step everyone should avoid. My tongue swelled from the 80 million stamps I had to lick to get my samples out.

"But to make a long story short. I got a call back from Malibu Comics about three weeks after I sent it out."

Kirk began working right away penciling Malibu's Planet of the Apes mini-series. Then he moved on to the Alien Nation mini-series which was based on the not-so-popular television series. Kirk also worked on the comic book, Galaxina. Even though the comic book is hard to find, it's worth the search.

His first regular series work was a strange series launched by Malibu, Dinosaurs For Hire. The comic featured well-armed dinosaurs who wage war on the enemies of whomever is the highest bidder for their services.

"When I got Dinosaurs, I was pretty happy. I felt that my luck was starting to change and I could make a living at drawing comics," he explained. "I started on issue number six and after about a year, the series was cancelled. So much for luck.

"But then the editor started talking about drawing on one of the flagship series, Star Trek: Deep Space Nine. I flipped."

Kirk's first work on the series appeared in issue number 10 and continued until the sudden cancellation of all Star Trek titles last April.

"It's just crazy that Paramount wants to just stop producing all Star Trek titles. I know that as far as revenues are concerned, comic sales are peanuts to a company like Paramount," Kirk laments. "But it just seems like bad public relations to me. If Paramount has learned anything from Star Trek, it's that its fans will respond."

One of the results of the Paramount decision is the planned launch of a number of new cross-over storylines featuring the crew of the Enterprise and characters of the Marvel Universe.

"No one I've talked to, X-Men or Star Trek fans, like the idea of the two universes meeting like this," Kirk said. "The Star Trek universe has always been separate from all other comic book universes and I think the reason for that is that it works.

"It looks like this cross-over idea is going to flop big time."

After Kirk started work on Star Trek: Deep Space Nine, other opportunities presented themselves. Kirk was now somewhat of a celebrity and began to receive invitations to conventions.

"First, I think it was a comic store signing that I did. They somehow got John Colicos (Commander Kor) to come out and do an autograph session and I was the other 'honoured' guest," he recalls. "Actually, it was a good experience because I got to meet the actor and he was very nice. Later, I attended Star Trek conventions in my area and they were fun too.

"It's always nice to have one's ego stroked."

"No one I've talked to, X-Men or Star Trek fans, like the idea of the two universes meeting like this."

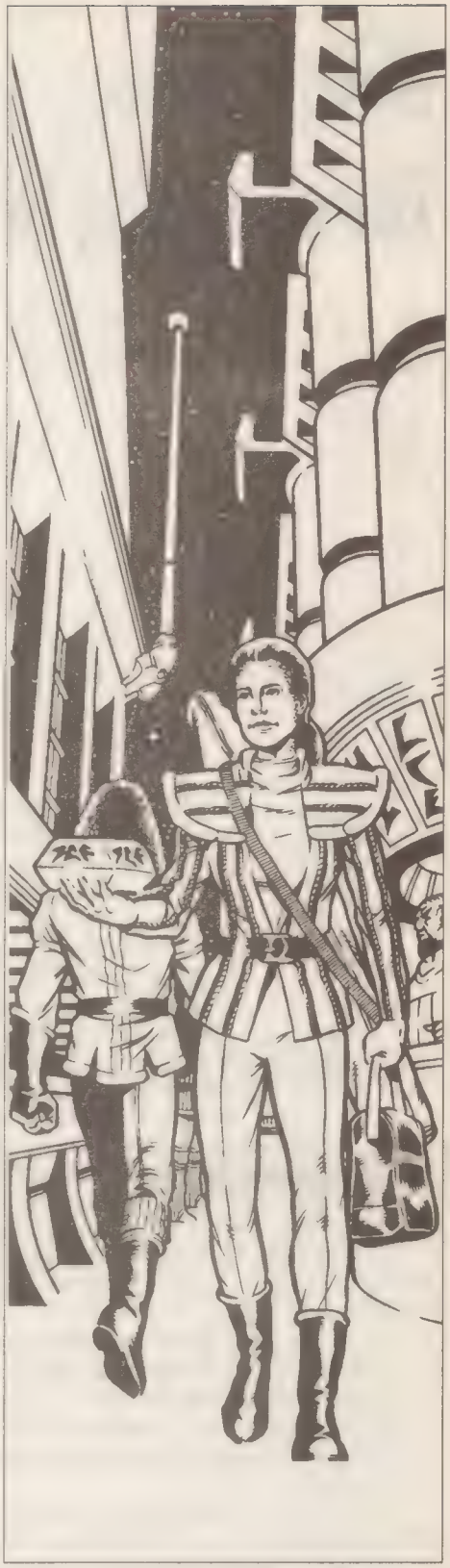
As a tribute to Colicos, Kirk's last Star Trek: Deep Space Nine book — which was also written by him — featured the return of Commander Kor to Deep Space Nine.

"Commander Kor scared the crap out of me when I was a kid, almost as much as Baltar from Battlestar Gallactica. After they brought the character of Kor back for the episode Blood Oath, I began thinking about how the character could be used in the comic.

"Incidentally, after I had the story approved, someone told me that they were bringing Kor back for The Sword of Kahless, so I thought my story would be scrapped, but fortunately it wasn't."

Kirk is now working on several projects for a number of companies. Although he is keeping busy, Kirk is still pinning to work on the next Star Trek project.

"I miss working on Deep Space Nine. I'll admit it. It was my dream job," he confides. "Even my comic book samples that I sent out to get my first job were of Star Trek. I've always liked the show and the comic. I hope the powers that be don't blow it." ☆



Courtesy Leonard Kirk

The Brock University graduate sent samples to all comic book publishers until he gained the attention of the editors at Malibu Comics. His work on Dinosaurs for Hire led to penciling chores on the company's Deep Space Nine title.

There's nothing to celebrate on Oomblaug Day

Text
By DOMINQUE MILLETTE
Art
By JEAN-PIERRE NORMAND

Francis squirmed on the three-legged stool. Despite his best efforts, his nose wrinkled at the omnipresent odour of decayed flesh. Across from him, Mrs. Zardog leaned forward, her mummified arms firmly planted on the carved mahogany desk, and said nothing. He glanced around the room, pulling at his collar. On the wall, a calendar featured fat, naked liveys, posing, surrounded by a few animal carcasses, and sitting on piles of worms. The liveys were smiling. They always smiled. Looking delicious had its advantages. You got more money and food that way.

Francis squirmed a little more. He felt conspicuously mortal. Alive. Human. A soft, squiggly thing.

Then, in a cavernous voice which echoed throughout the room, Mrs. Zardog dismissed his request for better ventilation, "Let's get one thing straight. Your pathetic sensitivity is not the result of our production methods. It's a livey thing. Get it fixed."

Francis felt his fear turn into anger. *Careful now,* he chided himself. *Stick to the facts. You know what happens to liveys who get upset. They use it against you. See, humans are nothing but weaklings. Why let them work for wages? Why not simply herd them into compounds?*

He took a controlled breath, trying not to look nauseated, and set forth his arguments. Logically, "Mrs. Zardog, ma'am. Many, many studies have shown that liveys are better, more productive workers when they have access to fresh air. Nasal operations are painful, and they take liveys out of the workforce for some time. They're also cruel. Smell is important to us."

Mrs. Zardog clicked her few remaining teeth impatiently. Her eyeless face scowled at him, "Those are livey studies no doubt. Other underlings have not complained," she rumbled out. "They get operations when they need them. We have other priorities. This is a clothing factory, not a livey pampering station."

Maggot-breath, thought Francis, looking across the desk. *Good thing zombies don't read minds. Not that it makes any difference now.* He heard his voice rise by half an octave, awash with defeat. *You idiot, why are you bothering. Because it's too late to back down, that's all.*

"All it takes is a separate ventilation. There are plenty of ways to do it cheaply. It's a small investment to boost overall production."

The answering snarl was stern and dismissive. "Need I remind you that, to boost production, we can simply replace you. It's not that difficult. There are plenty of desperate liveys who would love to be in your place. Have all the fresh air you want. You're fired. Don't come crying to me when you're homeless and someone bites your arm off for a little snack."

Francis blanched. He backed away shaking and stunned, staggered out of the office and ran out of the airless building.

Finally, out of breath, he staggered to a broken, rotting bench. After a few gulps of air, he stood up and continued.

All around the city strewn with bones of stray animals, banners hung across the street from lampposts. Day after tomorrow was Oomblaug Day. Oh, great. Commemorating conquest. As if we needed reminding, thought Francis.

He froze as a careening truck ran into a car full of liveys. The truck driver and passenger laughed at the shrieks of pain and the scream of metal shattering glass. Another day, another "accident." The recent dead were

fair game. No licence required.

A crowd swarmed around the twisted wreckage of the car. The dead were pulled out, arms and legs ripped off. Hair, brain, blood and gristle flew in all directions as the feast began.

Francis stumbled forward. Ahead was café, Its wooden facade was grey, the denuded clapboards faded by years of rain and sun. A few tables and chairs spilled out onto the sidewalk. Two of their occupants were debating loudly, oblivious to the carnage just a few blocks away.

A bombastic voice boomed above the rest, ". . . If we didn't have plenty of people selling their arms and legs or whatever, you know the zombies would just get worse. They'd go after the rest of us. And those pictures are just pictures. Besides, those liveys get paid enough. They make millions!"

Another voice piped in, slightly tremulous. "A friend of my cousin's dated someone who had a bite taken out of his shoulder after he posed like that."

Mr. Bombastic snorted with contempt. "Well, if you jiggle in front of the zombies, of course they're going to bite. But then you want the money, you take your chances . . . Anyway, it's their choice, not mine. You won't see *me* ending up between zombie teeth. *Zombie* friends," he added significantly. "We have a deal. I get them body parts and when my time comes, they'll initiate me."

Mr. Tremulous sounded skeptical. "They don't exactly initiate a lot of liveys. We get butchered faster than we can replace each other. The zombies want all the fresh bodies they can get their teeth into."

Mr. Bombastic was unfazed. "Maybe. But I'm different. I'm tough. They like that. I can drink blood with the best of them. And a deal is a deal . . ."

The voices trailed off as Francis walked on. His stomach churned. He hated ex-liveys more than he hated the originals who'd come out of their graveyards half-a-century ago. But the bosses needed a food supply, so, of course, they didn't kill everybody. They just moved into the big plush offices where hot-shot liveys used to be.

On a decrepit nearby wall, a billboard advertising an upcoming conference: "LIVEYS: ENFORCING POACHING PROHIBITIONS."

How considerate, thought Francis. Zombies could technically only hunt and kill vagrants, dissidents or Outsiders. If they could find any. Then again, maybe the Outsiders were just a myth. Everybody's sister had a story about them. Francis thought of Ernestine, the janitor, and her hatred of the "worm butts." One day she just left, and never came back. Like a few others he knew.

Francis continued toward his garrisoned dwelling. Much as he tried, he couldn't get used to the carnage. Sure, the world wasn't fair. But it was just depressing to see people ripped to pieces like that.

Suddenly, an unpleasant, pseudo-cavernous voice called out behind him.

"Hey, blood-bag! Move your little warm soft ass or it'll be dessert!"

Francis trembled. Despite himself, he whirled around to face his interlocutor. Bad move. If you were smart, you ran.

The creature facing him was in the earlier stages of putrefication. A recent, cocky swaggering recruit. What it had done for initiation was anyone's guess. Face bloated, skin green and purple, almost fresh. Francis could sense a wave of self-hatred and insecurity washing over its body as it stood in front of him, testing its new-found power like an aphrodisiac. of course, zombies didn't have sex. Sex was a livey thing, good for expanding the food supply, and another perfect illustration of how liveys were pathetic weaklings, with their mortal needs.

Her face was set in grim determination, steeled by bitterness and disappointment.

The thing smiled with malice, "You really want to feed me, don't you?"

It lumbered closer. Francis ran for his life. Away from the threat. He ran until his lungs screamed in pain and his legs felt like dropping off.

At last, the garrison was only a few dozen metres away. He could see its barbed wire and high steel bars beckoning to him like a womb of certainty.

Panting with exhaustion, he inserted his compu-key into the door slot, making sure no one was lurking behind, or in the shadows within. He slowly climbed the stairs, checking the mirrors installed, many of which were cracked, to see if any intruders could advance upon him.

The coast was clear. His garrison was relatively secure, compared to some of the older buildings where less-skilled, lower-paid liveys had to live.

Individual zombies couldn't resist trying to get a snack. Sometimes you were lucky, and they just ate your leg or something.

Francis shuffled into the apartment he shared with his wife. Linda greeted him with the arm she had left. Her right shoulder stump was neatly bandaged. Standard procedure. The limb would be auctioned off, and disappear into a zombie mouth.

Francis sank against the wall. "You lost your case," he stated in a monotone voice. Her face was set in grim determination, steeled by bitterness and disappointment."Yes, I lost. The old mummy was really out to get me. after all, I did hack an arm and a leg off of it."

Francis stammered out in indignation. "But it was in self-defence! He attacked you in the stairwell you were in!"

Linda shook her head. "I know, I know. Look, I'm not the first. I'm still alive. Bad things can happen to good people. We can't just give up hope, Francis. Besides, I can still work at the emergency desk. Others do it all the time. My uncle Fred had the same thing happen to him. They took off his right leg."

Linda sighed, walked up to Francis and kissed him on the lips, warmly and firmly. "What's done is done. We have to keep living."

Her eyes hardened. "Some day, we'll get even. Or we'll get away."

She turned to steady herself against the counter. "So how was your day? Did you get anywhere with your boss?"

Francis hung his head and felt the stinging tears of despair run down his cheeks. Linda threw her head back and took a deep breath. Calm, controlled. She never panicked. Besides, she'd encourage him to stand up for his livey rights. Great thinking. Now what will they do? He couldn't even take care of her now that she needed him the most. They would have to move out of the garrison.

"Listen," said Linda. "I have a plan. One of my friends has a business on the side. Counselling amputees. We met at the hospital this afternoon, after the amputation. I'll talk to him. The pay isn't good, but it's better than nothing. We'll make do. Less food, fewer clothes. At least we don't have children."

Francis gave a silent prayer of thanks for the hospital's underground sterilization clinic. It was risky. The penalty was death. Despite the threat, there was a huge backlog. At least hospitals were livey territory. Dealing with that biological stuff was a step down the social ladder for any self-respecting zombie.

Francis and Linda ate their meals in silence. Next door, a television set blared out the dialogue from a zombie movie. There weren't any livey productions showing anymore, except for *Night of the Living Dead*. Typical.

❑❑❑

Morning was grey and wet. Putrefaction weather. The newest recruits were out soaking up the rain, trying to rot as much as possible. Ancient zombies preferred to stay in and wait for hot dry weather, the kind that mummified you just right.

Oomblaug celebrations were gearing up. Francis covered himself with a baggy rubber poncho, hoping to pass unnoticed. As if. He felt like a walking

target as soon as he left the building. He strode with purpose, taking side streets, ignoring slobbering glances cast his way. His appointment was in half an hour.

He passed a zombie holo-cade. The brick facade featured simulated blood and plastic replicas of internal organs. The sound of zombie teleholos reached him, with its screams of liveys projected into labyrinths, trapped against the precipices, sliced, diced and joyfully dismembered. Zombie songs blasted out in accompaniment, *"Hey jiggle flesh! Let me splash your warm delicious blood all over my tooth stumps."*

This kind of material was supposed to be an improvement over actual swarming. Francis didn't care. One thing he did know. It made him feel even worse about life.

He hurried onward. The clinic was small, located in a crumbling storefront that used to be a greengrocers.

Francis peered into the room, his leg outside, trying to decide if he should go in right away and introduce himself. Linda's friend, Danny, was giving a pep talk.

"It's not your fault. You did the right thing when you tried to fight back," said the counsellor to the legless man. He then patted a woman's lap. "You sold your breasts because you needed to buy food. It's OK. You're OK."

One old man, a new member who was missing his left arm, cut into the spiel.

"I knew I shouldn't have come here. My doctor's a horse's ass. This is useless. Why don't we all just quit whining? My cousin lost an arm and leg during the resistance. He didn't complain. He was proud. Always looked on the bright side. As he used to say, 'Well, I can still smile and breathe, even if I can't dance!'."

An old woman, her leg cut off below the knee, nodded in response.

"I remember how awful it was back then! They didn't feed us right — just old, rotten animal carcasses. Then they figured out we were dropping like flies and not having babies. Now liveys have it easy, compared to when I was a young lass. It really isn't so bad. Sure there's the odd attack. Random, it is. Not like the old days."

One young livey stood up and sputtered. "But how can you just have accepted it? Why didn't you *do* something?"

The old woman shook her head in disbelief. "Do something? Do what? What are *you* doing, my young man?"

Her interlocutor stood silent. She nodded slowly. "We couldn't do anything then, and we can't do anything now. For all your talk, I don't see you heading any armies. What kind of armies can you have against creatures that are already dead?"

Francis cleared his throat to signal his presence. "What about the Outsiders?"

The old armless man harrumphed.

"Outsiders? Why they're just stories. The kind that keeps your hopes up for nothing. I tried to escape once. Didn't get far. Out there in the country, they go hunting for you. Dozens of them. I was lucky. I bribed a zombie to take my wife's right arm and my son's leg. Tastier than my old body. They consented to it. To this day, I'm eternally grateful for the sacrifice."

The old woman chimed in.

The old woman shook her head in disbelief, 'Do something? Do what? What are *you* doing, my young man?'

"Even if they're not stories, we can't all be Outsiders. The zombies just wouldn't let that happen. And there's nothing out there. How's a body supposed to live out in the cold and the rain like that? It might be bad over here, but at least we know what to expect. . ."

Danny interrupted, walking toward Francis, "I don't believe we've met. I'm the head counsellor. And you are?"

"Francis. Linda's husband. Pleased to meet you. My wife suggested I come over. She called first thing this morning."

Danny smiled. "Oh yes. The rebel. It's an honour to have you here. I'm so sorry about Linda's court case. Please, sit down."

Francis didn't feel like much of a hero. More like a loser. He took a seat nonetheless. Danny surveyed the group and concluded, "Well, our fifty minutes are up for now. Keep up your spirits. Remember, liveys have to stick together. We're here to help you. We share your pain."

The clanking of metal chairs, crutches and canes resounded as the assembly prepared to leave. Danny steered Francis into his office. Three wooden chairs, adapted with special bars and supports, faced a battered oak desk, its polish scratched and worn.

Dozens of files overflowed from the top of the desk and from rusted filing cabinets. Danny waved his hand at them in a mock gesture of despair.

"Case histories. Five years worth. They need to be sorted and filed, A to Z, by date. Right now, it's a nightmare to try to refer back to any one. We finally rounded up enough donations to pay for one year of help. So, glad to have you aboard. You've got half an hour for lunch and two breaks a day. Dig in. I have another group coming in. Sorry for the abrupt introduction. We'll talk at noon. See ya."

He closed the door behind him. Francis surveyed the mounds of paper. He sighed and grabbed a handful of files.

Within these pages lay the broken lives of hundreds like Linda's. People who broke the rules or were desperate enough to sell themselves. Brady, S., 03/54. Sheldon, H., 04/55. He made 26 separate piles on the floor, on the desk and on top of the filing cabinet. The dates would be sorted later.

As he sifted through, a few pages slipped out of an especially thick file, four-years old. He cursed and gathered up the stray papers.

Gold, Marilyn. He froze. It was one of his old girlfriends. Despite himself, he read through the file. To make sure.

It was her. Born in '44. Beautiful, golden girl Marilyn. He read further. Marilyn was in bad shape.

Both arms, one leg and both breasts were gone. Voluntary amputations. She must have had trouble finding work. Two children. One dead during swarming.

Francis closed the file.

He felt a bottomless sorrow, then fury.

All those years held in check, from fear, from a sense of the inevitable, his rage erupted through his every pore, shaking his body.

Had a swarm of zombies walked into

the office at the moment, he would have died striking at them.

❑❑❑

Oomblaug Day.

Menace hung in the air like a thickening fog. The clinic was closed to ensure everyone's safety.

Looking out the window, through the bars and the double-glass panes, Francis felt nothing. His fear had deserted him. Rage and hatred had subsided to a dull, constant throb. Outside the garrison, zombies were streaming toward the graveyards to drink a little blood, crunch a few bones and swap feasting stories. For liveys, it was a time to stay indoors.

Dozens of files lay scattered across the apartment floor. As he ordered them, he thought of Linda. And Marilyn. Linda was at the hospital. There might be survivors. He had entreated her not to go, but she was adamant.

A frantic pounding on the door and a hoarse voice calling his name, startled him out of his brooding. He jumped up. Zombies. They must have broken into the building. Whoever was outside the door was probably half shredded by now. If he let the person in, he was sealing his own death warrant. He picked up a heavy wooden chair and walked up to the door. All he heard was panting and sobs. No other footsteps, no moans, shrieks or cries. Strange. He opened the door.

Danny stumbled in, his face and clothing splattered with blood, his left arm was badly mangled. He trembled spasmodically, his eyes wild and desperate.

"I'm so sorry," he gasped out. "Oh my God, I'm so sorry. Please. We have to stay here. Barricade the apartment. I had things downstairs, but I couldn't carry them up."

"Linda," muttered Francis, and sank to his knees on the floor.

Danny nodded, his features contorted with pain.

"They swarmed the hospital. I was there, talking to Linda. Everything happened so fast. They got to her first."

Francis covered his face with his hands, his body rocking in silent anguish. Slowly, he raised his head up to face Danny.

"There's gauze and antiseptic in the washroom. I'll get them."

He moved as if caught in a web, his shoulders sunk as he attended to the living. As Danny yelped in pain, alternately offering words of comfort, he washed and bandaged the mass of dangling muscle and splintered bone.

"The zombies pushed through, snarling and snuffling. Three of them, one a recent initiate, lipless rictus followed by purplish stumps. The bombastic voice crowed, 'Well, well, hello there'."

There was a shuffling and scrapping noise in the hall. Danny's voice rose by an octave in hysteria.

"The door!"

It was too late. The zombies pushed through, snarling and snuffling. Three of them, one recent initiate, lipless rictus followed by purplish stumps. The bombastic voice crowed, "Well, well, hello there." Danny screamed in terror.

Electrified with rage, Francis grabbed the oak chair and swung blindly. One of the zombies was behind him. Danny leaped forward, his last gesture of courage. Enough time for Francis to hack off a few more limbs.

The doorway was momentarily clear. Francis ran out, throwing the chair at his attackers. The stairwell was empty, littered with bone, blood and gristle. He slipped and slid down.

The street was deserted. Outside, Danny's car idled, locked, with the windows closed. Inside were pipes, beams and blocks of heavy wood.

In the garrison entrance, guttural moans of malice resounded. The sounds drew closer.

Francis smashed through the car window with a nearby rock, unlocked the door, jumped in and sped forward, out of the city, through side streets in disaffected areas, not stopping, praying no other vehicle would smash into his. As he drove, he forced himself not to look at the carnage and prayed no one would stop him. The blockades out of the city would be likely less guarded, with most zombies at city graveyards. His stomach tightened in white hatred.

As he approached the city limits, he saw his conjectures confirmed. A lone zombie, ancient as parchment, stood at the exit gate. It was tightly shut, enmeshed in barbed wire, its thick steel railings the diameter of lampposts. The sides of the road were an impassable jumble of concrete blocks, heaped a metre high, spread out as far as the eye could see.

Francis slowed and grabbed a heavy jagged pipe, cradling it between the seat and the door. The zombie guard shuffled forward, armed with a massive, nail-studded beam. Francis stopped the car at a safe distance, 25 metres from the barricade, and reached over for a panel of wood. It was a wardrobe door. He used the handle to lift the door like a shield above his head and emerged from the car.

The zombie swung at him with obvious contempt. Francis blocked the blow easily and slashed at the guard's leg, his adrenaline pumping furious strength into his livey body. The leg flew off in a cloud of dust. Francis sliced off the mummified head and quickly kicked it out of the way. The body was still moving.

He sliced off the other leg, and ran toward the control house. The barricade clanged open. Francis dropped his shield, sprinted back toward the car, and drove through. He then shut the gates again as tightly as he could and destroyed the controls.

Let them walk.

No one followed him. The guard had evidently not believed it necessary to alert any comrades. So much the better.

He drove on for hours, his fists knotted against the steering wheel, his stomach a ball of molten lava. The roads were in an advanced state of disrepair. The countryside beyond the designated farms, where livey workers sweated under zombie overlords, was a mass of tangled forest, littered with blanched bones, devoid of animal life.

The road stopped. Logs piled high onto the broken concrete. There was nowhere to swerve, the surrounding woods thick with heavy oak and pine.

Francis braked sharply. He sat, shaken and numb, sweating on the cracked red vinyl, despite the increasing cold. His anger melted, replaced by a creeping terror that grew with the night shadows

rapidly encircling the barricade of fallen trees. There was nowhere else to go. This was the Outside.

He grabbed the battle-pipe and carefully opened the car door. Only the sound of stirring leaves greeted him. He walked up to the stump of a fallen oak. The cut was clean. No accident or flash of lightning had tipped the mighty trunks.

Was this the work of Outsiders or zombies? His trembling increased, approaching hysteria.

Careful, he commanded himself. Panic won't help you. Even against zombies. He willed himself to the cold stark fury that had gotten him out of the citadel. Remember Linda. Remember Danny. Remember Marilyn. He marched forward into the woods.

No path had been ripped into the wilderness. If the Outsiders lived here, they left no obvious traces. He scanned the tall grasses, the thorn bushes and the pine needles on the undisturbed ground.

Then he saw it.

A gold-plated eagle on a chain. Like the one that dangled from Ernestine's neck, the janitor, the last he'd seen her, before she disappeared. Ernestine never spoke much.

She just looked stubborn, her eyes hard. She was tough, defiant, always swaggering about with her floppy coveralls and loud, brightly-colored checkered shirts. She always spat out at "the dirty rotten maggot-bags."

That was years ago.

The eagle was just hanging there from a branch, as if someone, or something, had placed it there. Francis reached up to grab it, then stopped his hand in mid-air.

Why was it there?

Was it some kind of signal? Out here, it wouldn't have any value. It was best left alone.

Then the noises came. From all around, dozens of footsteps. Francis gripped the pipe tighter. He caught sight of a faded, mud-encrusted overall and a distinctive, if tattered, tartan flannel, moving faster than the rest, partly hidden by the dense foliage. It was Ernestine. She was alive.

Francis whooped in relief, and ran up to greet her.

Ernestine's face emerged from the moving shadows of surrounding foliage. She was grinning.

A permanent, lipless grin, with just a touch of green, mottled, surrounding flesh . . .

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A beer, a hot car . . . and a zombie or two

Roadkill

Text
By EDO VAN BELKOM
Art
By STEFAN VALENT

"Gimme another brew," Marty Slipchuck said, rolling down the window of the Cuda and lighting an unfiltered Export A.

Cal Jonas turned around in the passenger seat, got onto his knees and opened the cooler in the back seat. "Bud or Sleeman?"

"They both cold?"

"Zomboid."

"Gimme a Sleeman, then."

"You got it."

Cal pulled a clear bottle from the ice for Marty and grabbed a can of Bud for himself. When he was back in his seat he straightened his glasses on the bridge of his nose and handed the bottle of Sleeman to Marty.

"Thanks?" Marty said. He opened the bottle with his teeth, spit the cap out the open window and laughed. "Who'da thought I'd ever be sucking this stuff back regular."

Cal popped his Bud and snickered. "Yeah, you got real class now, Marty. Real class."

Marty put the bottle to his lips, upended it and emptied half its contents before stopping to breathe.

Before everything got all fucked up, Marty had worked at dozens of jobs, none of them for very long. The virus had been little more than a bump in the road of his life. While the rest of the world had gone ape-shit over zombies, Marty had merely shifted gears.

"There's one!" Cal said, beer spluttering out of his mouth along with the words.

About half a mile away, the hunched over figure of a zombie had wandered out from the row of trees lining the edge of the highway. Although it stumbled aimlessly along the road, the zombie was making definite progress in their direction, no doubt attracted by their scent. Neither of them had bathed in over a week.

Marty took a final pull on the Sleeman and tossed the bottle into the back seat. He took a last drag on his cigarette, flicked the butt out the window and reached for the ignition.

Cal snickered, threw his still full can of beer out the window and put on his seat belt.

Marty had found Cal in the back of a Seven-Eleven with his pud in one hand and a copy of *Hustler* in the other. He'd taken Cal with him, not only to have someone to kick around, but to have someone to talk to as well. Cal wasn't much, but he was still better than the dead stations of the Cuda's radio.

"What you gonna do this time, Marty?" Cal said. "You gonna roadkill it? Are you?"

"Not tellin'," Marty said, evenly. He turned to Cal and smiled, baring all four of his teeth. "You'll just hafta wait and see."

He turned the ignition and the Cuda's head-

70
90
110
130
10
9
8
7
6
5
YOU LIKE THAT?
Stefan Talent

ered 340 thrummed to life like some animal rudely awakened from a deep sleep. He revved the engine a few times, shifted into first and let go the clutch.

The Cuda's rear wheels screeched against the pavement as the slicks tried to grab hold. The smell of burning rubber grew thick, then suddenly they were off, hurtling down the interstate on what felt like a rocket sled.

Marty's lips drew back into a thin white line, his fingers curled tightly around the wheel and his eyes turned ghostly white as they stared blankly out at the highway.

Cal looked over, saw the roadkilling look of the reaper in Marty's face, and began bouncing in his seat. "You're gonna get it, you dead motherfucker!" he screamed.

The needle of the Cuda's speedometer began its arch across the dash.

. . . 20 . . . 25 . . .

Roadkilling zombies had become one of the nation's favorite pastimes.

. . . 30 . . . 35 . . .

Marty and Cal had done over fifty of them in the last month alone, but they never grew tired of it.

. . . 40 . . . 45 . . .

There was a rush connected with the crunch of bone and the splat of dead meat that drugs alone just couldn't match.

. . . 50 . . . 55 . . .

And there was no shortage of zombies. What was left of the government had estimated there were still half a million of them roaming the cities and countryside.

. . . 58 . . . 60 . . .

Marty eased off the gas. Any faster and they'd totally destroy the zombie on impact, not to mention wreck the Cuda.

Besides, anybody could run the fuckers over, the real fun of roadkilling was playing with them, seeing how dead you could make them before they stopped living.

With less than fifty yards to go, they could see the zombie in some detail. It was, or at least had been, a woman. She was wearing what looked to be the shredded remains of a dark grey business suit, but it was hard to tell where the suit ended and the mottled flesh began.

"It's a bitch, Marty!" Cal cried. "A fuckin' bitch. I bet she liked to take it up the ass."

Marty's right hand whipped out and

The needle of the Cuda's speedometer began its arch across the dash.
. . . 20 . . . 25 . . .

smacked Cal hard in the mouth. "Shut the fuck up while I'm trying to drive!"

Cal looked hurt for a moment, but quickly resumed his giggling once he looked ahead and saw that they were seconds from impact.

"Holy Shit!" Cal said.

The Cuda slammed into the zombie . .

WHAM!

. . . breaking the dead thing in two.

The bottom half of its torso and legs stuck to the front of the car while the upper body and head slid over the hood, bounced off the windshield and flew twenty feet in the air before landing on the highway behind them.

Marty slammed on the brakes and brought the Cuda to a screeching halt.

"Fuckin' A, man!" Cal said, closing his eyes and shaking his head, giddy. "Broke the fuckin' bitch in two."

Marty smiled for the first time since starting up the Cuda."Did you like that?"

"You're the fuckin' best, Marty. Chopped her down like Paul Fuckin' Bunyan."

Marty's face turned grave. He looked in the rearview mirror. The top half of the zombie's body was still in tact. It was also moving, clawing its way toward the Cuda with its arms.

"It's still alive," Marty said, calmly but with obvious pleasure as he shifted the car into reverse.

"What? No fuckin' way, man." Cal stopped giggling for a moment and turned around. "I don't believe it."

Marty eased the Cuda back, peering out the open window so he could line up the car's left rear tire with the zombie's head.

"You gonna do her slow?" Cal said.

"Yeah."

"Nice and slow." Cal was hyperventilating. "The same way she liked to take it up the ass. Nice and slow."

The Cuda came to a stop when the rear tire rolled up against the zombie. Marty eased out the clutch and the tire slowly began turning, climbing up onto the thing's head.

A loud crack ripped through the air as the zombie's skull collapsed under the weight of the Cuda, followed by a steady crunching sound as larger pieces of bone were ground into pulp.

Jets of zombie splat and dead brain matter spurted across the pavement onto the other lanes of the highway as if a rotten tomato had been roadappled by a semi.

"You're the best, man," Cal howled with delight.

Even Marty gave a chuckle. "I ain't finished yet."

With the rear tire sitting squarely on the gray pulp of the zombie's head, Marty revved the engine and popped the clutch.

Without a posi-track rear end, the Cuda's right rear wheel wouldn't move as long as the left rear kept spinning. And with nothing but slimy rotten meat beneath it, the left rear tire spun as easily as if it were on a patch of ice.

Marty put the gas pedal to the floor.

Bits of dead flesh and roadkill juice flew out in front of the car as Marty had brought the V8 close to the red line.

Cal had his arms across his chest, twisting and turning in an uncontrollable fit of laughter. "Stop it, Marty," he shouted over the motor's roar. "I swear I'm gonna piss my pants."

Marty laughed then too, pressing his foot down further on the gas.

"Oh, shit!" Cal managed to say as a wet stain began to appear in the crotch of his jeans.

Marty pointed to the piss stain and screamed with laughter.

Just then the spinning tire made solid contact with the highway.

The Cuda jolted backward, and stalled.

Marty and Cal stopped laughing.

The air was thick with the stench of charred flesh and burnt rubber. The inside of the Cuda was deathly silent.

"What the fuck happened?" Cal said, finally.

"Just stalled." Marty said, turning the ignition.

Click! Nothing.

"Uh-oh," Cal said. "We're fucked."

"We're not fucked," Marty snapped, his voice a little unsteady. "Nothing I can't fix." He pulled on the lever beneath the dash to pop the hood.

They got out and went around to the front of the car.

And stood there, staring.

Half of the zombie was stuck to the front of the car, the worn down stumps of its legs were bent backward, trailing away beneath the front of the car.

"Well go ahead," Marty said. "Get it off."

"You want me to touch it?"

"No, I don't want you to touch it, stupid. There's a tire iron in the trunk." He gave him the key.

Cal walked around to the back of the car and returned with the tire iron. Then, being careful not to touch the thing with his hands, he scraped the zombie's hips and thighs from the Cuda's grill and bumper. When the car was clean, he opened the hood.

While Cal worked under the car, Marty walked around back to see if there was any damage to the car's rear end. Except for a half-inch thick coating of zombie slime in the wheel well and on the shocks, everything looked okay.

Again they were left staring, unable to speak.

When the car jolted backward the rear wheels had thrown one of the zombie's arms up into the motor. It had gotten tangled up in the belts, stalling the car.

But that wasn't the funny part.

The funny part was that the thing's fingers were all curled up except for the middle one — the zombie was giving them the bird.

Cal giggled.

Marty's left hand flew out and clipped Cal in the back of the head. "What the fuck are you laughing at?"

Cal turned to Marty, a hurt look on his face. "Nothing."

"Good. Now climb under there and get that thing out. We gotta get the fuck out of here."

It was dangerous to be out in the open for any length of time. If one zombie had smelled them out on the highway you could bet there were more on the way. Best thing to do was to get the hell out and call it a day.

Cal got down on the ground, crawled under the car and got to work trying to loosen the zombie's arm with the tire iron. He smacked it a few times, but it was wedged in pretty tight. He changed his position and tried again.

While Cal worked under the car, Marty walked around back to see if there was any damage to the car's rear end. Except for a half-inch thick coating of zombie slime in the wheel well and on the shocks, everything looked okay.

"I'm going to need your help, Marty. It's really jammed in there," came Cal's voice from beneath the car.

It was followed by a scream.

Marty rushed around to the front of the Cuda, but stopped abruptly when he saw another zombie, this one dressed a little like a short-order cook, down on all fours biting into Cal's neck.

Marty wanted to help, but knew it was already too late.

As the zombie prepared to take another bite, Cal looked up at Marty, his eyes wet, wide and full of terror. "Help me," he cried.

Marty watched helplessly as the zombie's teeth crunched through Cal's skull and dug into his brain. Cal's face lit up in pain, then went limp, lifeless. His eyes remained open, but there was nothing behind them.

Marty managed to turn away. He clapped his hands over his ears, but he could still hear the ripping and slurping sounds as the zombie tore into Cal's flesh like a hungry dog with a steak.

In the distance Marty could see another zombie wandering out from the trees. Further down the highway in the direction of the city, two more figures appeared on the horizon. In minutes there'd be dozens of dead things surrounding him.

He ran around to get into the car, but when he reached the driver's side door, he remembered the car didn't work.

He slammed a fist down into the Cuda . . .

And felt a hand grope for his neck. The zombie had finished with Cal and was now after him. Marty shook himself free of the thing's grasp and slammed its head against the roof of the car.

There was the familiar sound of cracking bone as the zombie's head turned soft and pulpy in his hands. Marty let go of it and it fell onto the highway in a heap.

The other zombies were getting closer.

Marty started to run back up the hill, back in the direction he had come.

❑ ❑ ❑

Jackson James cupped his girlfriend's right tit in his hand and squeezed the nipple between his thumb and forefinger.

"I already told you I'm not in the mood," she said, pulling his hand away from her breast and putting it firmly back onto the seat behind her. "Besides, you said we were going roadkilling."

"We are, babe," Jackson said. "But these things take their time coming out on the road. I thought we'd do a little boffing while we waited."

"I don't feel like it, all right," she said.

"How bout a blow, then?"

She shook her head in mild disgust, then suddenly perked up in her seat. "There's one of those things now."

Jackson gazed at the zombie approaching them on the highway. It moved a little faster than most, and was waving its arms around a bit, but that was good.

"This should be fun," he said, starting up the Chevy pick-up. "This one looks like it's still got some life left in it."☆

Next issue:

Another dimension heard from

Flash is back

Lacewood Studios brings legend to television

By
CHRIS KREJLGAARD

You could call it Sheldon Wiseman's baby.

Wiseman, the head of Lacewood Studios, is one of the guiding forces behind the return of Flash Gordon to television — more than 60 years after the character was created by cartoonist Alex Raymond.

"I've always had an interest in Flash Gordon. I've been intrigued by the character for years."

It was an interest that was created and nurtured by the movie serials featuring Buster Crabbe. So when he was approached by Media Toon of Montreal and Hearst Entertainment of New York City to create the series, Wiseman jumped at the opportunity.

"Those serials had effects that are pretty primitive by today's standards," Wiseman says in his Ottawa office. "But back then, they were pretty good."

Lacewood has created 26 episodes of Flash Gordon for Canadian and U.S. audiences. In Canada, the series began its run on YTV in late August.

The premier culminates more than a year-and-a-half of work by about 60 artists. Flash is accompanied on his

off-earth trip by Dale Arden and Doctor Zarkov. The three battle the forces of Ming the Merciless and face the duplicity of Princess Aura.

Rather than the slick haircut sported by Crabbe or the bleached coif of Sam J. Jones in the 1980 movie, Lacewood's Flash has a do that would put him in good standing at the local mall. He also wears an outfit that seems better suited for a rapper than for an intergalactic traveller.

"It's a very contemporary version of Flash," explains Wiseman, who founded Lacewood in 1987. "Flash is a bit hip, but we're still remaining true to its roots."

It is the character's roots that Wiseman says will play a large part in any success the series enjoys.

"Flash Gordon has a great history and its spawned a lot of other science fiction projects."

Wiseman said that Flash's history created some difficulties for the creative team as they developed the animated series.

"It definitely made it more difficult because everyone had an idea about what the characters should look like or what the series was about."

Flash Gordon is not the first animated series for the Ottawa production house (they're responsible for Savage Dragon and Monster Force), but it is Lacewood's first production in animé.

"It is a realistic style of animation, not a cartoon-style," Wiseman explains. "It's very realistic in terms of body proportions and the way the characters move is almost like live-action."

Besides the two other series, Lacewood has also been responsible for Katie & Orbie, For Better or For Worse and The Nutcracker Prince. Projects such as these have kept Lacewood busy since it was founded by Wiseman in 1987.

The variety of projects undertaken by the company is a result of "coming to projects with a business background, according to Wiseman.

Before creating Lacewood, Wiseman had been involved in land development and corporate law.

"Law was secure, much more than starting a studio. Now everyday is a challenge, you never know what's going to happen," said Wiseman.

One case involved financing an animation project. His exposure to the medium sparked his interest and resulted in the creation of Lacewood.

"I had no preconceived notions about where the company would be in 10 years," said Wiseman. "But now we're one of the three largest animation studios in Canada. Our work is distributed to more than 60 countries world-wide.

"The prospects are very exciting."☆

Courtesy Lacewood Studios

Flash takes on a more-contemporary appearance in Lacewood's hands.. Princess Aura, the daughter of Ming the Merciless, is one of the many villains that Flash must face on the planet Mongo.

Comprehending Aeon Flux no easy task

By
EMRU TOWNSEND

When *Aeon Flux* first appeared on MTV/(Colossal) Pictures *Liquid Television* series in 1991, it seemed rather shallow: sexy in an angular, anorexic, Euro-comic sort of way, the title character did little more than kill plenty of people in interesting ways.

She was every science-fiction action movie hero rolled into one animated engine of destruction.

Shortly after, the show took on a mysterious tone, where things were quickly established as not necessarily being what they seemed. The more visceral elements of the show were still there, but it was clear that this was the thinking person's sex and violence.

In more than one interview, creator and director Peter Chung has made clear his intentions with respect to the show: the idea was to take the cliches and conventions of action and science fiction movies, and twist them around in such a way that viewers would question their acceptance of these conventions, and scrutinize the show a bit more carefully. Further, there was no dialogue in the show, meaning that no explanations were handed on a platter — the viewer had to try to make sense of everything on his or her own. In fact, knowing that MTV would put *Liquid Television* into heavy rotation, Chung specifically designed the show in such a way that complete comprehension might require repeated viewings.

The first season of *Aeon Flux* was, in fact, one short that ran about 12 minutes or so. This was broken up into six shorter segments, each of which was aired during a *Liquid Television* episode. With the second season of *Liquid Television*, there was another series of *Aeon Flux* shorts — only this time, each episode was self-contained, and presented in no particular order. Plus, another twist of convention: someone died in every episode.

Aeon Flux was easily one of the most popular segments of *Liquid Television*, and was one of two to be spun off into a series of half-hour episodes (the other being *Beavis and Butt-Head*).

This 10-episode series forms *Aeon Flux* "third season," which

Continued on Page 36

Top Gun's style similar to Wing Commander

By
GREGG VAILLANCOURT

Tom Cruise For a Day

If you've ever wondered what it would be like to fly in one of the those awesome jets made famous in the movie Top Gun, here's your chance.

Top Gun: Fire At Will gives you the chance to play the role of Tom Cruise's character from the film, Maverick.

Your objective is to go from theatre to theatre stopping forces of evil wherever they rear their ugly heads.

This game is supposed to be a flight simulator for those not familiar enough in the cockpit to be considered a flight jock. The game is very similar in style to the Wing Commander games where every flight you take usually ends in a little movie sequence to advance the plot. But Wing Commander is based in space combat with big furry mutant kittens as the enemy. In Top Gun, you are flying over military hot spots here on earth and the enemies are guns for hire renegade pilots who like to antagonize the ol' US of A.

Don't expect to see Tom Cruise (you'd have to take out a small loan to buy a game with him in it), but you will be given orders by Hondo (played by James Tolkan who reprises his role from the movie) and kept up to date on military conflicts in the world by Amanda, the roving reporter (played by Julie Carmen).

Now, to the guts of the game. For the most part, the game looks very smooth and plays well with multimedia touches here and there making for a very beautiful piece of work.

As has been said by many a gamer, though, the play's the thing.

No matter how good the storyline is (and it's very good) it doesn't mean much if the game doesn't play well.

During your first mission, you may be impressed by the fact that you get to tweak everything from the graphics options to the difficulty level which is based upon your tastes in game styles and previous experience with flight simulators (a neat option). Soon, though, all the tweaking in the world won't matter much to those of us who are flight jokes rather than jocks.

The problems with the game begin to show themselves in your missions at the Top Gun Training Academy. These missions (roughly 10 in each theatre of the Academy, Cuba, Korea and Libya, adding for a grand total of roughly 40 missions for the game) at the Top Gun Academy are different from others in the game since they are based upon a running score of your performance.

If you consider fighting with limited weapons too difficult (like me) and just want to keep firing until the objectives are met (the only way for rookies) then prepare for your score to hit rock bottom.

You see, this is not a good thing for two reasons.

One is that in future missions you must complete every part of the mission in order to move on (an impossible task at times) and two, your score has to get out of the cellar because part of the full motion video script has you winning the Top Gun Award at graduation.

This means that you can't just get by, you really have to do well or any mission that is even slightly imperfect results in game over.

Another problem is that the full motion video rarely follows anything specific that you or your wingmen do (i.e. it's scripted that you are always trailing your rival Stinger in the quest to be Top Gun) and in fact, usually contradicts it.

There was one thing I found very annoying. While training, some wingmen plays the enemy and you must shoot the pilot down in order to win the mission. But if they should happen to die by hitting the ground or a cliff side, and you think you are homefree, you arrive at the "game over" screen because the same group or person will be in the script later on.

Whatever happened to casualties of war???

A similar problem is also encountered if your wingman manages to get himself killed by the real enemy later on in the game.

No matter how well the mission goes its still game over.

Something else that bothered me was that since I have no desire to become a flight jock or put in the long hours for it, I chose to play with all of the easiest settings.

Some of you may call me a wimp.

Web Word

Off in the distance you can hear the call to arms, "SPOON!"

And you know help (or trouble) is on the way. Yes, it's the Tick. And there are a number of websites dedicated to the bastion of justice. But one of the best is Spoon: Tick Home Page (it's a wonder anyone can find it). The page contains episode guides, images of the Tick, trusty sidekick Arthur, his comrades in the battle against evil and the villains that plague his every waking hour and a page devoted to his comic book exploits.

The site can be found at: **http://www.cs.rose-hwman.edu/~stinerkt/Tick.html**

OK, for those of you who have a taste for ancient times and women in steel and leather corsets, there's the numberous websites dedicated to Xena, Warrior Princess.

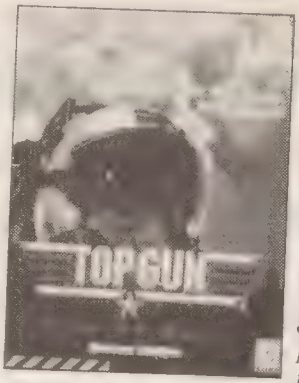
But what about her trusty sidekick and ancient-time public relations flak, Gabriel the Bard?

Well, there's a few sites dedicated to her and among the best of the lot is: **http:www.bright.net/~starfox/gabriel.html**

The site includes a bio of actress Renee O'Connor, as well as images that can be downloaded and links to other Zena-related spots.

On the hunt for some science fiction information? Where to find the latest paperback? A rare Star Trek poster (if there is such a thing)? Wondering what convention is coming up? Then call up the Canadian SF & F Resource Guide at **http://www.magi.com/~gonzo/cansfrg.html**

Go ahead, I'd rather be a wimp than a flight jock zombie without a life left due to computer monitor sunburn.



The problem was that once I got out of Top Gun flight school (it took forever) and I was cruising the not so friendly skies going from mission to mission (some of which can only be won with unlimited weapons since there are near unlimited enemies), once the Libya theatre began, my unlimited weapons feature was turned off.

I now had very limited weapons and no matter how many times I checked the difficulty settings I was shown as having unlimited weapons (how untrue!!!).

By the fourth Libya mission, the first three I managed to beat by myself with no cheats, I found I had hit the proverbial wall.

I was now expected to keep my wingmen alive (if one dies, it's game over), myself alive (if I die it's game over) and I execute the mission perfectly to advance the plot along.

I don't know if this is what is meant on the back of the box by " increasing levels of difficulty" but to me seeing the same "game over" screen over and over was all I could take.

Other problems encountered were the numerous game crashes and the occasional sound bytes or dips that would keep repeating (growing very tiresome) which usually leads to a game crash.

So if you can put up with all of these bugs and consider yourself a better than average flight-sim player, then you'll really enjoy the plotline in this movie based flight-sim.

Top Gun: Fire At Will requires:

❑ *IBM PC 66MHz 80486DX Compatible, Pentium Recommended 8MB RAM and 30MB Hard Drive Space or 16MB RAM and 15MB Hard Drive - Space VESA Local Bus or PCI Video Card Capable of Super VGA Graphics (640 * 480 * 256 Colours).*

❑ *DOS 5.0 or Later (Also runs Under Windows 95)*

❑ *Double Speed CD©ROM Drive (300kb/second sustained transfer rate)*

❑ *Joystick*

❑ *Mouse*

❑ *Soundblaster (10-per-cent compatible), ProAudio Spectrum or Ensoniq Soundscape.*

❑ GreggVaillancourt's column appears in each issue of Parsec. He can be reached at Unit G, Suite 108, 1942 Regent St., Sudbury, Ont., P3E 3Z9 or at parsec@vianet.on.ca.

Networks make Flux hard to follow

diverged significantly in structure and tone from the first two.

The mayhem diminished somewhat, and on now had a concrete, definite nemesis — Trevor Goodchild, the only other major character to recur from the first two seasons. Then there was the addition of dialogue; the segments actually became chatty.

However, these changes did not dilute the show. Rather, these self-contained episodes added depth to the characters, while keeping them consistent with the first two seasons.

And, contrary to what one might assume, the addition of dialogue did not make the show any less strange, confusing, or thought-provoking.

Aeon Flux, in all three incarnations, has consistently been some of the best science fiction to come on North American TV.

For such a must-see series, Canadians have had a hard time seeing *Aeon Flux*, as the show was exclusively broadcast on MTV in the US. MuchMusic did get the rights to broadcast the first season of *Liquid Television* years ago, but did so in such a way that the various shorts were randomly interspersed between videos — anyone who caught one fragment of *Aeon Flux* would have had to be extremely lucky to catch another. As of the 1996/1997 season, YTV is airing *Aeon Flux* in the 12:30 a.m. slot on Friday nights, but it's not likely that the first or second season shorts will be shown.

If you need to get a more comprehensive *Aeon Flux*, Sony Music Entertainment has released *Aeon Flux Volume 1*, which includes the complete first season short, four of the five second season shorts, and four of the third season episodes.

❑ Emru Townsend is editor of fps, the magazine of animation on film and video.

Gibson takes on celebrities in latest work

By
GREGG CHAMBERLAIN

No one can ever accuse William Gibson of writing ordinary science fiction. One of the founding forces behind cyberpunk, Gibson can share some of the credit for helping wire up a new subculture for the '90s.

And now for something completely different, the author of Neuromancer, Virtual Light and other works explores the smoke-and-mirrors world of celebritydom in his latest book, Idoru.

A science fiction novel about being a celebrity?

"My work doesn't really deal that much with things that have been the traditional concerns of science fiction," the Vancouver-based author explained. Gibson's sf focuses on the social side effects of technology rather than the nuts-and-bolts end.

"I think sf is really valuable in that it allows us to have a handle on the present we live in which is like a sf scenario in so many ways."

Part of Gibson's decision to explore the theme of celebrity in his new novel came from his own exposure to the phenomenon of celebrity-hood through his contacts in the pop music world and Hollywood. While the movie, Johnny Mnemonic, brought minor celebrity status to Gibson himself, he says the actual day-to-day experience of being a celebrity — with all its perks and perils, is more of a hazard for musicians and movie stars.

"Thank God, writers just don't become that famous," Gibson noted that, for the most part, writers don't have the problem of instant recognition that actors and musicians have, to the extent where some can't even spend a quiet evening out at a restaurant without paparazzis ambushing them.

In Idoru, Gibson examines the effect of cyberculture on the entertainment arts. Some of the celebrities in the world of Idoru are not even real people. They are cybernetic simulations, holographic actors and musicians, which have achieved celebrity status even though they're not real. Their fans might even prefer them that way. These stars will never fade, never change and never disappoint them.

Articles in science fiction as well as science and technology have speculated about the possibility of creating holographic reproductions of dead actors to feature in new movies with live co-stars. Gibson already knows of a popular music star in Japan who is actually a composite of different people. The voice belongs to one person, the face to another and so on.

The fans only see their idol on video, never for real on stage, and they don't care.

After having studied and written a book about celebrity, Gibson has his own thoughts about what the difference is between being a celebrity and being famous.

"I think of celebrity as the mediated product. Fame has been around forever. Celebrity can be manufactured. There is a huge industry that manufactures celebrity. Celebrity can be sold," Gibson cites, as an example, people today who enjoy celebrity status just for being beautiful.

"In the 1960s, we had models but we didn't have 'supermodels'."

Idoru also explores the nature of reality and existence, constant topics for speculation for Gibson. He believes that people's sense of reality today is different from what it was 50 years ago thanks to the electronic media.

"Media is so much a part of us."

Gibson believes that the electronic media has changed the way we perceive things. We live in a society where many people see the world in television flashes and sound bites.

Then there is the Internet. Gibson describes the Net in Idoru as "10 times more evolved so that everyone and everything in the world is involved in it. The distinction between your real life and your Net life is blurred."

He's met people who already have trouble distinguishing between their virtual lives and their real ones.

The late pop artist Andy Warhol once quipped that everyone gets 15 minutes of fame. Gibson believes that society may be getting closer than ever to that concept thanks to web sites on the Internet.

"People who have web sites have the potential to be celebrities," Gibson notes.

Gibson suggested that if the Net ever fulfills its potential of being a powerful democraizer, the Great Equalizer of future society, it could change the whole nature of being a celebrity. Being a celebrity now is a broadcast media phenomena, at the discretion of the people who either run or who can manipulate television and radio."

If Warhol was still alive, Gibson believes he would have been one of the first people to have set up his own web site.

"I wonder what Warhol's web site would have been like." ☆

Book Reviews

It is a rare book that makes you wish you had picked up the earlier pieces of the series.

Spider Robinson's Callahan's Legacy (Tor) just happens to be one of those books. The novel makes me want to pick up the other members of the Callahan's Crosstime Saloon series (something that, as you read this, I have done).

In a time when overwrought tales are commonplace in the genre, Robinson makes science fiction fun. But don't mistake this for a mocking of science fiction, rather he mocks the perils of modern life by placing it in a science fiction setting — in this case, Mary's Place, a Suffolk County bar.

This installment pits Jake, Zoey and the wateringhole's regulars against the

Continued on Page 38

Continued from Page 37

formidable threat of a three legged, three-breasted purple lizard. They lose, the earth dies because the lizard is bound to tip off the extraterrestrial cockroaches.

Robinson provides the readers with characters that are likeable and profound. During the course of the story, the reader gains insight into the pain that some of these characters have suffered during the course of the years, and despite these problems, have managed to overcome them, learn from them and live life with a smile on their face. These are people that you end up wishing were more than words on a page.

Robinson also provides a place that readers wish was located in their neighborhood. (I'd give anything for a coffee machine like the one behind the bar). It is a warm, inviting establishment that falls prey to . . . well, let's just say to the forces of nature.

Callahan's Legacy reinforces Robinson's (and his wife/collaborator Jeanne's) reputation as a consummate storyteller, who can entertain and teach while still remaining true to the foundation of science fiction.

— LARS JOHANSON

❑❑❑

Game released

Working Designs of Redding, CA., has released Dragon Force for SEGA's Saturn system.

The role-playing game, has players taking on the part of one of eight warlords. After forming their armies, the commander sets out to conquer he seven other castles.

Soldiers in the conquered castles may or may not join the player's cause. The game is over when all the castles in Legendra fall under the sway of a single player. Because of the length of the game, Dragon Force supports both SEGA's external backup RAM cartridge and SEGA's mouse peripheral.

I must confess, I like Klingons. Their kick-butt-I-could-give-a-rat's-a-- attitude just seems to strike a chord with me.

That is probably why Kahless (Pocket Books) is so disappointing. These proud warriors are reduced to babbling wimps at the hands of writer Michael Jan Friedman (whose work in comics and other Star Trek books I have usually enjoyed). In fact, knowing that Friedman can do better just adds to my disappointment.

Klingons never struck me as a particularly wordy bunch. But in Kahless, they not only talk too much, but also use dialogue more suitable to modern-day Earth than it would be to the Klingon homeworld in the future and in the past.

In the novel, Friedman jumps between the ancient times when Kahless united rebel forces against a tyrant and brought about a time of honor and present-day (in terms of Star Trek) when forces are plotting against Gowron — yep, there's an original plotline.

If Friedman had stuck to one plotline or another, then perhaps he could have salvaged a passable book. But as it stands the plotline involving Kahless's past life, although markedly better than the chapters involving Picard, Worf and Kurn's efforts to save Gowron, only serves to bring the reader to a single plot twist.

It's really too much work to get to the one plot twist that is easily missed if the reader blinks.

And despite my affection for Klingons, it's not really a task I would encourage.

***

While on the subject of Star Trek, Pocket Books has re-issued Gene Roddenberry, The Last Conversation.

Since this is a re-issue, there isn't much sense in rehashing this pedestrian work. Suffice to say, author Yvonne Fern (who is the wife of Herbert Solow, the former head of Desilu) shows immense gall. In her forward to the new edition, she admits that some of the stories that family friend Roddenberry had told her for the first version had turned out to be false.

But because of her close relationship with the Roddenberry's, she tells the reader that she decided not to refute the earlier tales. Huh?

If nothing else, this demonstrates the pitfalls of getting so close to your subject that all sense of objectivity is tossed out the window.

— CHRIS KREJLGAARD

❑❑❑

Ever wonder what happened to Boba Fett , Bib Fortuna or Salacious Crumb after Jabba the Hutt bought the farm out in the desert?

Well, then Star Wars: Tales from Jabba's Palace (Bantam) is the book for you. Editor Kevin Anderson has brought together an inspiring group of writers to flesh out the lives of the palace's supporting cast.

The works of Canadians Garfield and Judith Reeves-Stevens, as well as Timothy Zahn, A.C. Crispin and Kathy Tyers all blend together for a rich tapestry that fills one of the few voids remaining from the trilogy.

Anderson displays deft handling of the subject matter and the various styles of the authors and in the bargain gives the reader some of the best that these authors have to offer.

***

In Silverlight (Baen), authors Morgan Llywelyn and Michael Scott carry the reader through an ancient, magical world where abominations abound and heroism is a rare commodity.

Caeled, Gwynne, Sioraf and Madran are fleeing the forces of evil sorcerer twins, the Duet, who are developing a new strain of warrior through the forced breeding of humans and animals. But before they can take control of the entire world, they must first dispose of Caeled. Caeled is the prophesied changer of worlds who will defeat the forces of the Duet.

This well-textured work transcends the usual fantasy good-vs.-evil fare. Its characters are well-defined and their depth evokes responses that are not usually generated by other fantasy works — sympathy for the fallen and hatred and disgust for the villains.

If there is a sequel in the works, it has a lofty benchmark to attain.

— JON MAYALL

PARSEC CONVENTIONS

Oct. 18-20

Contradiction 16: Days Inn Fallsview, Niagara Falls, N.Y. Scheduled guests: Hal Clement, Nancy Kilpatrick, Robert Sawyer, Edo van Belkom. Registration: $25 until Sept 23, $30 thereafter. Information: P.O. Box 100, Bridge Station, Niagara Falls, N.Y. 14304.

Oct. 24-27

NorthStar 1: Harrison Hot Springs Resort, Richmond, B.C. Scheduled guests: S.M. Stirling, Tracy Tormé, Forest J. Ackerman, and Graeme Cameron. For information http://www.computel.com/~mimick/Star (800) 665-5454 or (604) 280-2801. Tickets: $55 at door.

Oct. 25-27

Concinnity '96: Journey's Ed, 222 Hearst Way W. (Highway 417 & Eagleson), Kanata, Ont. Scheduled guests: Larry Stewart, Lloyd & Yvonne Penney. Registration: $20 before Sept. 30 and $25 at the door.

Nov. 1-3

Primedia: Days Inn, 6257 Airport Rd., Toronto, Ont. Scheduled guest: Lisa Ryder, Nigel Bennett, Edo van Belkom, Robert J.Sawyer. Information: 68-2035 South Millway, Mississauga, Ont., L5L 1R7; (416) 820-3844; website: http://www.io.org/~kcozens/primedia

Nov. 2

Eye of Orion: Celebrating 33 years of Doctor Who. Convention is operated within Primedia. Scheduled guest: TBA. Information: Lisa Truant, 69 Prennan Ave., Etobicoke, Ont., M9B 4C2 or e-mail at Irwin@datasoft.com

1997

March 14-16

Odyssey Four: Ramada Hotel, Hamilton, Ont. Scheduled guests: Greg Kramer, Larry Stewart, Nancy Baker. Registration: before Jan. 6 — weekend $30, Friday $12, Saturday $22, Sunday $17; door: $38, $15, $25 &20.

Information: SASE to Odyssey Conventions Inc., Box 7 RR 2, Lynden, Ont., L0R 1T0; e-mail: fmitchel@netaccess.on.ca; or website: http://www.hookup.net/~bhagey/odyssey.

April 11-13

FILKONTtario 7: Hotel unconfirmed, Toronto. Scheduled guest: Talis Kimberley. Registration: $30 Cdn./$23 U.S. until Oct. 31; $35 Cdn./$27 U.S. until March 24.

Information: 302 College Ave. W., Guelph, Ont., N1G 4T6 or e-mail Judith at D.HAYMAN@genie.geis.com or Heather at ci507@freenet.toronto.on.ca.

May 16-18

Keycon 14: Winnipeg Crowne Plaza, Winnipeg. MB. Scheduled guest: Kevin J. Anderson, Margaret Weis, Ruth Thompson. Registration: Until Oct. 31, $25; until Feb. 28, $30; until April 30, $35; at the door, $50. Information: P.O. Box 3178, Winnipeg, MB, R3C 4E7

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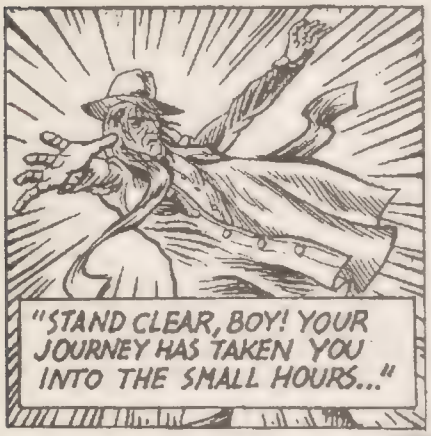
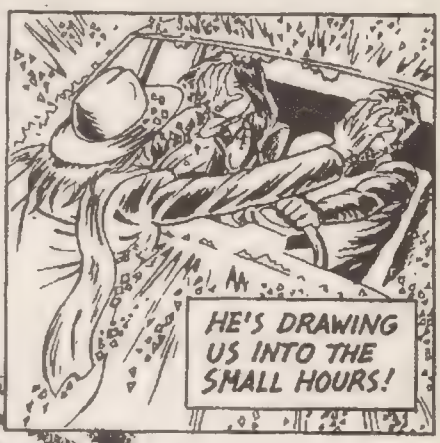
UNKNOWN FORCES

STORY: KENNEDY GORDON
PICTURES: JOHN TKACHUK

THE STORY: HAVING RESCUED HIS WIFE FROM THE GRIP OF THE EVIL DOMINATORS, DEL MAR FLEES THEIR SANDBLASTED DESERT OUTPOST ONLY TO ENCOUNTER AN OLD ENEMY: THE MYSTERIOUS OUTCAST KNOWN AS TATTER.





THE SMALL HOURS... TATTER'S GOT US IN HIS HEAD. DAYS, MONTHS, SECONDS OR A YEAR... HE COULD KEEP US SPINNING AROUND IN HIS MANGLED PSYCHE FOR AN ETERNITY. UNLESS...

GOOD GOD... WE CAN SEE IT ALL. THE DOMINATORS ARE EVERYWHERE, EVERYWHERE. THEY'RE RUNNING THE ARMY, THEY'RE TEACHING OUR CHILDREN, THEY'RE... LORD. THERE'S A DOMINATOR IN THE WHITE HOUSE.
IT IS ALL OVER. ARMAGEDDON IS HERE.

CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE

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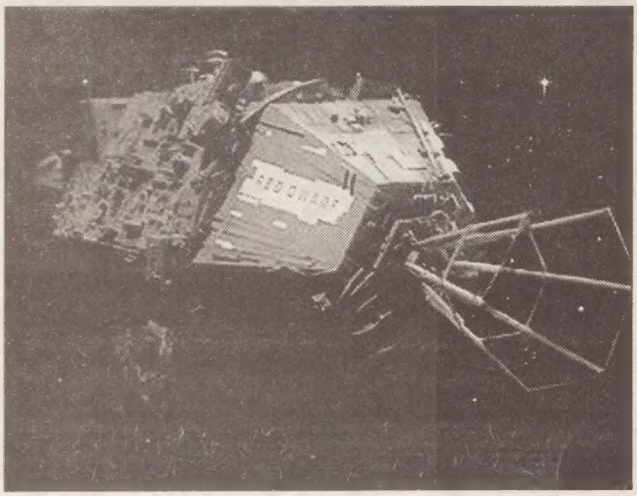
Oh, Smeg!



It had to happen, a Red Dwarf brain teaser. But as promised, we have changed the format a bit.

Put your name, address, telephone number and answers on a sheet of paper and send them to Brain Teaser c/o Parsec, Unit G Suite 108, 1942 Regent St., Sudbury, Ont. P3E 3Z9. Before Nov. 1, 1996. We'll draw one person's name from our prize barrel and that person will win a mini-sci•fi library. (You don't have to get all the answers correct — but we might be impressed enough to toss in an extra prize if you do). How's that for a change?

1) What does "smeg" mean?

2) What does "Level Nivelo" mean?

3) How many times did Lister have his appendix out?

4) How many people were in Red Dwarf's crew?

5) What are the two official languages on the Red Dwarf?

6) How many times has Rimmer had sex? (Do not answer this if you are under the age of 18).

7) Can Rimmer leave the ship?

8) What is the name of the vehicle carried by the Red Dwarf?

9) What is the first line of the show's theme song?

10) What is found on Rimmer's forehead?

11) What is the name of the song from the show that was released in Great Britain?

In 1992, the U.S. network NBC commissioned a pair of pilots for the show before shelving plans to put the series into production on this side of the Atlantic. The pilots have rarely been seen, but two of its actresses have moved on to bigger and better things.

10) Who played Holly in the first of the NBC pilot?

11) Who played the Cat in the second pilot?

14) Which actor appeared in both the BBC version of the show and the two U.S. pilots?

15) What was put on Rimmer's forehead in the first pilot?

16) How was Lister able to survive the disaster that befell the Red Dwarf?

17) Where was the Cat when disaster struck?

18) What was the disaster?

19) What is Lister's first name?

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